



Community Assessment

October 2009

Town of Braselton **2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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*in association with Jordan, Jones & Goulding
and Market+Main*



CONTENTS:

1.0	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Braselton: Town & Context	
1.2	Historic Development Patterns	
2.0	Demographics.....	7
2.1	Population	
2.2	Age Distribution	
2.3	Racial Composition	
2.4	Educational Attainment	
2.5	Income	
3.0	Land Use.....	13
3.1	Zoning	
4.0	Housing	19
5.0	Community Facilities.....	21
5.1	Parks & Recreation	
5.2	Schools & Education	
5.3	Police	
5.4	Fire Protection & EMS	
5.5	Public Utilities	
5.6	Solid waste Management Facilities	
5.7	Stormwater Management	
5.8	Service Delivery Strategy	
5.9	Library	
5.10	Hospitals	

6.0	Transportation.....	33
6.1	Circulation Framework	
6.2	Road Hierarchy	
6.3	Traffic Counts	
6.4	Proposed Plans	
6.5	Strengths and Opportunities	
6.6	Weaknesses and Threats	
7.0	Natural, Cultural & Historic Resources.....	39
7.1	Natural Resources	
7.2	Cultural & Historic Resources	
8.0	Economic Development.....	47
8.1	Key Economic Indicators	
8.2	Unique Economic Assets	
8.3	Major Findings: Trends & Issues	
9.0	Issues & Opportunities.....	54
10.0	Quality Community Objectives.....	56
11.0	Areas Requiring Special Attention.....	65
12.0	Recommended Character Areas.....	67
12.1	Primary Character Areas	
12.2	Other Character Areas	



1.0 INTRODUCTION:

This community assessment is the initial phase of the Town of Braselton 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The town's Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2003. Since then, the town has undergone a significant amount of growth - especially within the residential sector. Based on that recent and anticipated continued development pressure, the Town is taking aggressive steps to nurture, guide, and direct future growth to maintain a high quality of life in Braselton.

The Community Assessment document inventories the town's existing conditions and amenities and assesses their functionality and relationship to one another. The assessment will enable the town to take stock of where they are today (strengths and weaknesses) and where the town wants to go (opportunities and challenges).

This document captures the characteristics of the town in multiple categories. These categories form the framework on which good growth management and community development principles can be constructed. They provide insight into the physical, economic, and social structure of the town including: demographics; land use; housing; community facilities; transportation; natural, cultural and historic resources; and economic development. The inventory and assessment of these attributes lead to an identification of issues and opportunities and the identification of character areas.

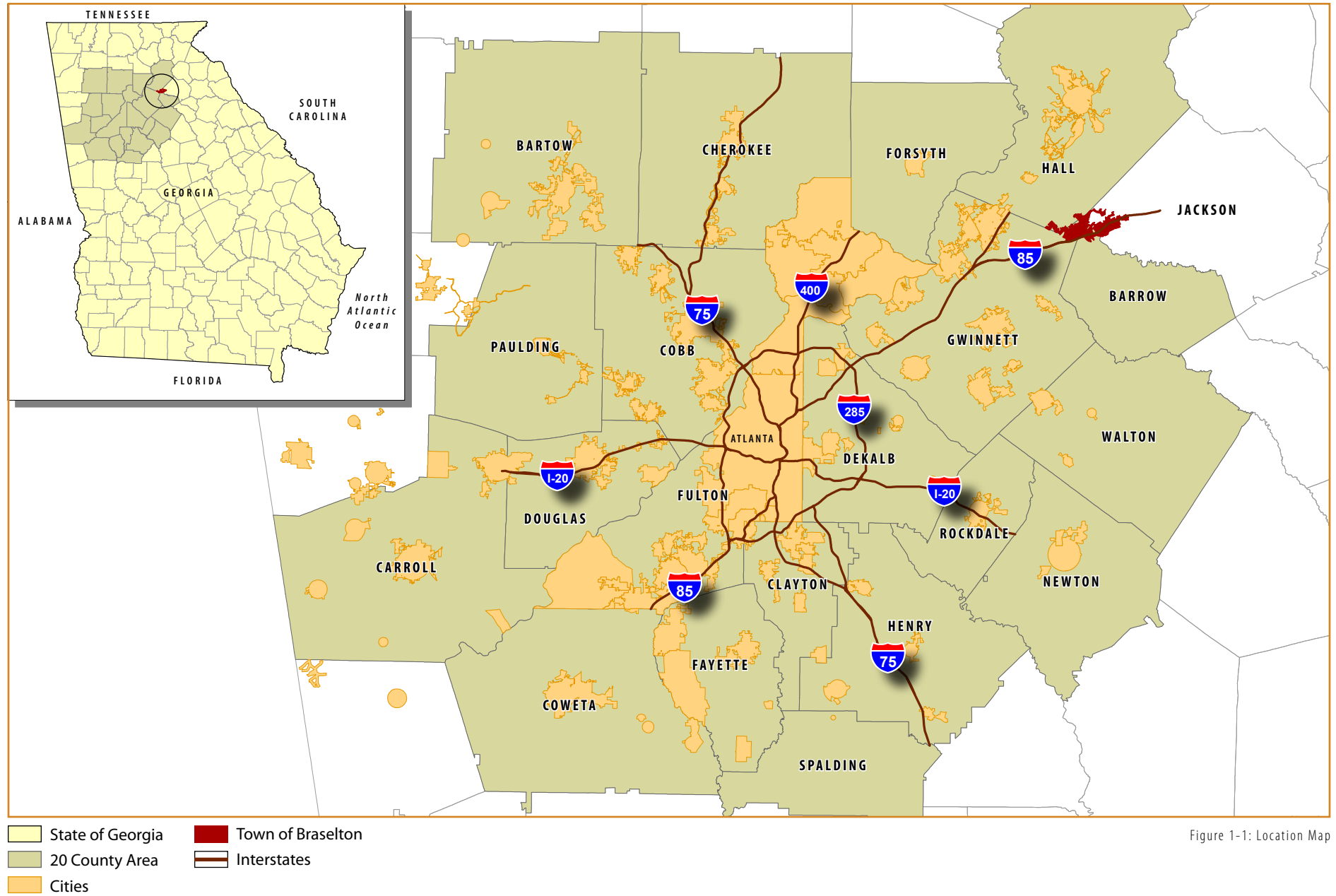


1.1 BRASELTON: TOWN & CONTEXT

The town of Braselton is located in the northeast region of Georgia, along Interstate 85. It lies 44 miles northeast of the City of Atlanta and is spread across four counties: Jackson County, Hall County, Gwinnett County and Barrow County. The town has grown from its incorporation as a one mile area surrounding the intersection of SR 124 and SR 53 to approximately 12 square miles (approximately 7,800 acres). This geographical spread offers residents of the town increased options for community facilities like parks, recreation and schools but also provides challenges when trying to consolidate and provide uniform and efficient community services. The present boundary of the town has a wide geographic range from east to west and limited depth north to south. Within the boundary are several significant “peninsulas” of unincorporated property separating one portion of the town from another.

The town is served by a road network whose primary routes are I-85, SR 124, SR 53, SR 211, and SR 347 . The Town of Braselton is bisected by the Mulberry River flowing in a north-south direction. The town has gained notoriety as a destination due to the presence of the Chateau Elan Resort and Winery and Road Atlanta, a race course just north of town along SR 53 to the north.





1.2 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The Town of Braselton obtained its charter from the State of Georgia in 1916. The historic downtown area sits at a misaligned crossing of SR 53 and SR 124. For the next several decades the community, named for William Harrison Braselton, grew as a mercantile center as the area's railways conveyed cotton and other agriculture products while delivering dry goods and other commodities to the town.

At the town's crossroads the Braselton Brothers Store, a two-story structure that housed a bank, grocery, dry goods, and feed and seed outlet, became the town's social and cultural epicenter. The Jackson County jurisdiction had a population of 165 as late as 1950.

The 1960s and the advent of the Interstate Highway System brought new opportunities to the Town of Braselton. Interstate 85 has become one of the nation's busiest interstates and while the historic downtown has maintained its mercantile roots, the surrounding area has become a hub for warehousing and distribution on the fringe of the Atlanta Metropolitan Area.

In 1988, a 42,000 square foot Chateau designed in the style of a 16th century French royal retreat was completed as the first phase of the Chateau Elan Winery and Resort. The resort now includes a Four Diamond, 276-room Inn, several golf courses, and culinary and spa facilities and has become a prized Country Inn and conference/retreat location. The resort attracts more than a half a million visitors a year and the adjoining Chateau Elan Golf and Residential community has thrived as part of Braselton.

Over the last decade, Braselton's growth has been rapid. The Town's population increased 284% between 1990 and 2000, and continues to expand as development moves north from Atlanta up Interstate 85 and as new residential areas are added within and on the periphery of Town. The Town spans four





Figure 1-2: Downtown Braselton - 1960



Figure 1-3: Downtown Braselton - 2008





Figure 1-4: Chateau Elan - 1960



Figure 1-5: Chateau Elan - 2008

counties and boasts a population approaching 6,000. The list of corporate businesses locating in Braselton continues to grow. The Town's industrial parks are home to Mayfield Dairy, Panoz Auto Development Company, Tractor Supply, Progressive Lighting, PetCo, The Home Depot, YearOne and Haverty's Furniture's Southeast Distribution Center.

Braselton's success can be attributed to several key factors. The municipality's location on the I-85 corridor provides excellent transportation access. The Town has its own water and sewer infrastructure. The area is highly regarded as a quality residential environment with a high quality of life. Local leaders focus on small town values, while seeking to ensure smart, positive future growth.

In addition to the town's effort to preserve its history, the Braselton Town Hall itself is an award-winning preservation of one of the Braselton Brothers former homes, its forward-thinking philosophy is encapsulated in the Town's motto: "A past to preserve and a future to mold."



2.0 DEMOGRAPHICS:

The following socioeconomic profile presents a statistical description of the Town's historical performance and recent trends, and provides a brief explanation of the factors influencing these changes. Understanding the Town's dynamics, in terms of key economic and demographic indicators, will help frame the issues and opportunities to be addressed in future planning efforts.

2.1 POPULATION:

- Between 1990 and 2008, the Town of Braselton grew at a much faster rate than the four surrounding counties, the Atlanta MSA¹, the state of Georgia, and the nation.
- This growth trend is projected to continue through 2013, however, at a lower rate than previously expected due to regional and national economic trends and challenges that began in 2007.
- Although the Town's growth rate has been very strong, it is important to note that these large percentages are based on a small base population (535 in 1990).
- Almost 60% of the Town's housing units were constructed between 1999 and 2007, indicating the significance of recent residential construction.

¹ The Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is made up of 28 counties: Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Jasper, Lamar, Meriwether, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton.

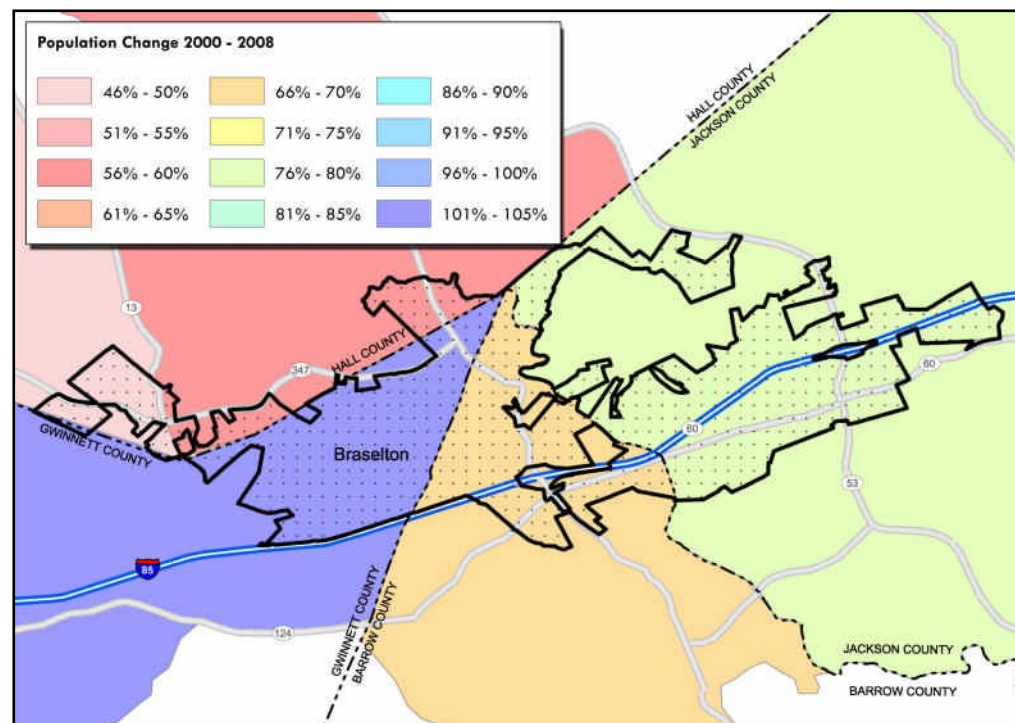


Figure 2-1: Population Change Map, 2000-2008

Source: Claritas and Market + Main, Inc.



Between 1990 and 2000, the town's population grew by a significant percentage, however due to the Town's small size, the actual increase was less than 700 residents. Between 2000 and 2008, the town's population grew by 4,834 residents. Over the next five years, population is expected to grow an additional 38% within the Town - still a much larger percentage increase than any of the other geographic areas considered.

	Town of Braselton	Barrow County	Gwinnett County	Hall County	Jackson County	Atlanta MSA	Georgia	United States
1990	535	29,721	352,910	95,428	30,005	3,069,411		
2000	1,206	46,144	588,448	139,277	41,589	4,247,981		
2008 (estimate)	6,040	68,448	797,504	181,704	59,780	5,357,017		
2013 (projected)	8,395	83,156	930,554	208,928	71,915	6,065,700		
Population Change								
1990-2000	125.4%	55.3%	66.7%	45.9%	38.6%	38.4%	26.4%	13.2%
2000-2008	400.8%	48.3%	35.5%	30.5%	43.7%	26.1%	18.0%	8.1%
2008-2013	38.9%	21.5%	16.7%	15.0%	20.3%	13.2%	9.8%	4.9%

Table 2-2: Comparison of Population Changes

Source: Claritas, Market + Main, Inc.

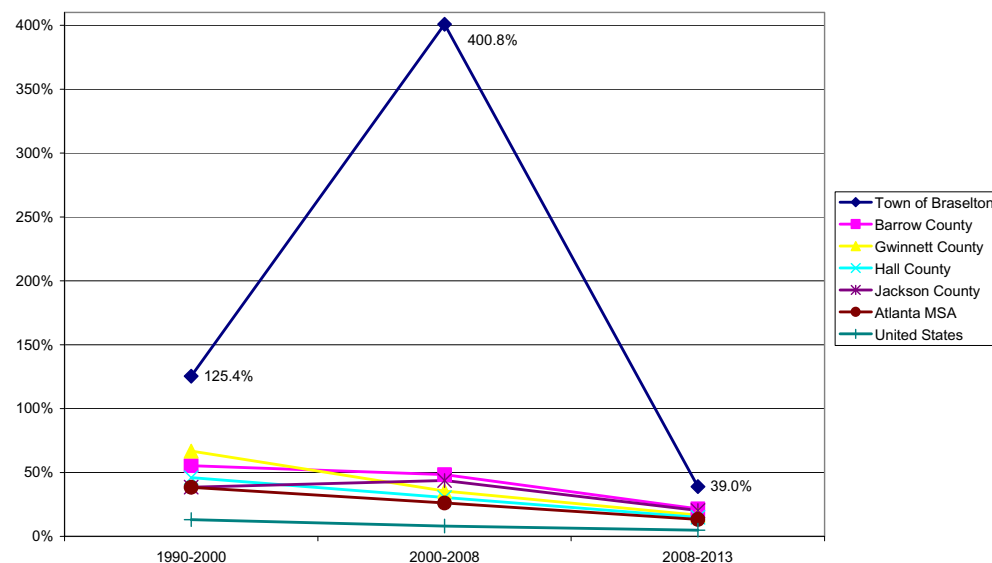


Figure 2-3: Population Change Comparison, 1990-2013

Source: US Census Bureau, Claritas, Market + Main, Inc.



2.2 AGE DISTRIBUTION:

- The average age of Braselton residents (38.3) is higher than the average of the four surrounding counties, the MSA (35.1), the state (35.7), and the nation (37.5).
- Growth is increasing fastest for the population over 55 years of age.
- All age groups over 55 years are projected to increase by 46% over the next five years.
- It is projected that the weakest growth between 2008 and 2013 will be in the 35 to 44 years of age category, with all of the groupings aged between 25 and 55 showing slow growth. This is a cause for possible concern as the population of those in retirement age grows faster than those in the prime of their earning potential.

When looking at the age of residents, Braselton is a somewhat older community. The significant population of older age groups is projected to increase over the next five years. For long term stability, a community must have a healthy balance of those entering the workforce, those in the prime of their earning potential, and those in their retirement years. When one of those groups is overrepresented, it typically shows a need for greater employment and/or housing opportunities for the other groups.

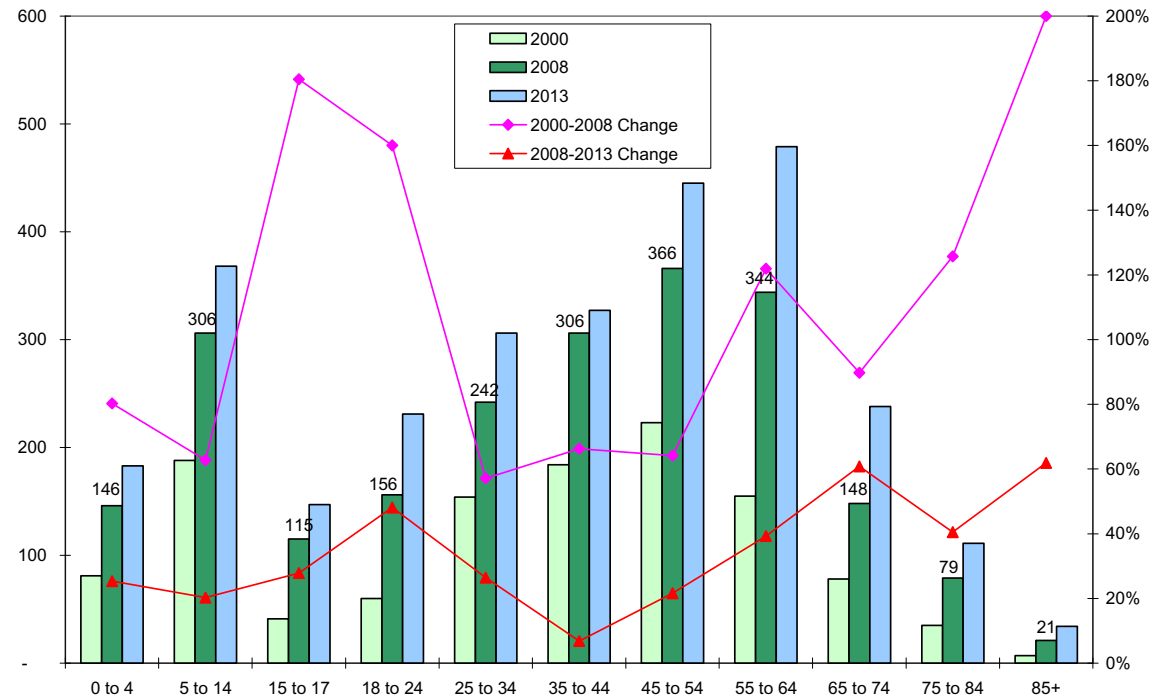


Figure 2-4: Age Distribution and Change Trends, 2000-2013

Source: US Census Bureau, Claritas, Market + Main, Inc.



2.3 RACIAL COMPOSITION:

- Braselton is predominately Caucasian at about 84% of the population. Asians are the second largest population group in the Town at approximately 9% of the total. Hispanics make up a small, but notable portion of the population at about 5%. African-Americans make up 1% of the population.
- Between 2000 and 2008, the growth rates for Asian (193%) and Hispanic (178%) populations grew at a much faster rate than the growth rate for Caucasians (81%). Unlike the nation as a whole, the African-American population in Braselton grew at a slower pace than the Caucasian population with a growth rate of 56%.
- Between 2008 and 2013, the Caucasian population is projected to grow by 18%, while the Asian population expected to grow by 58% and the Hispanic population by 62%. The African-American population is projected to grow by a slower rate (12%) during the same time frame.

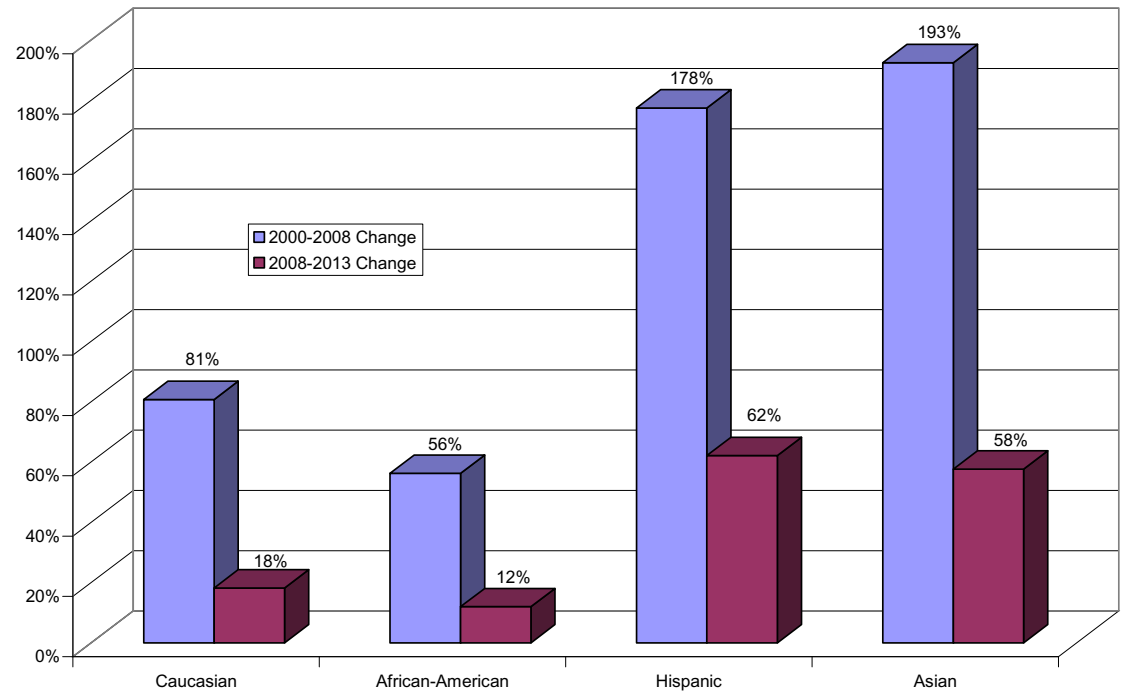


Figure 2-5: Change in Racial Composition, 2000-2013

Source: Claritas



2.4 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT:

Overall, Braselton compares relatively well in terms of educational attainment. Those with less than a high school diploma make up about 15% of the Town's population. This is a smaller percentage than the Atlanta MSA, the state, the nation, and all of the surrounding counties with the exception of Gwinnett. The Town's percentage of college graduates is higher than that of the nation, the state, and three of the surrounding four counties and appears to be growing based upon residential and in-migration over the last decade.

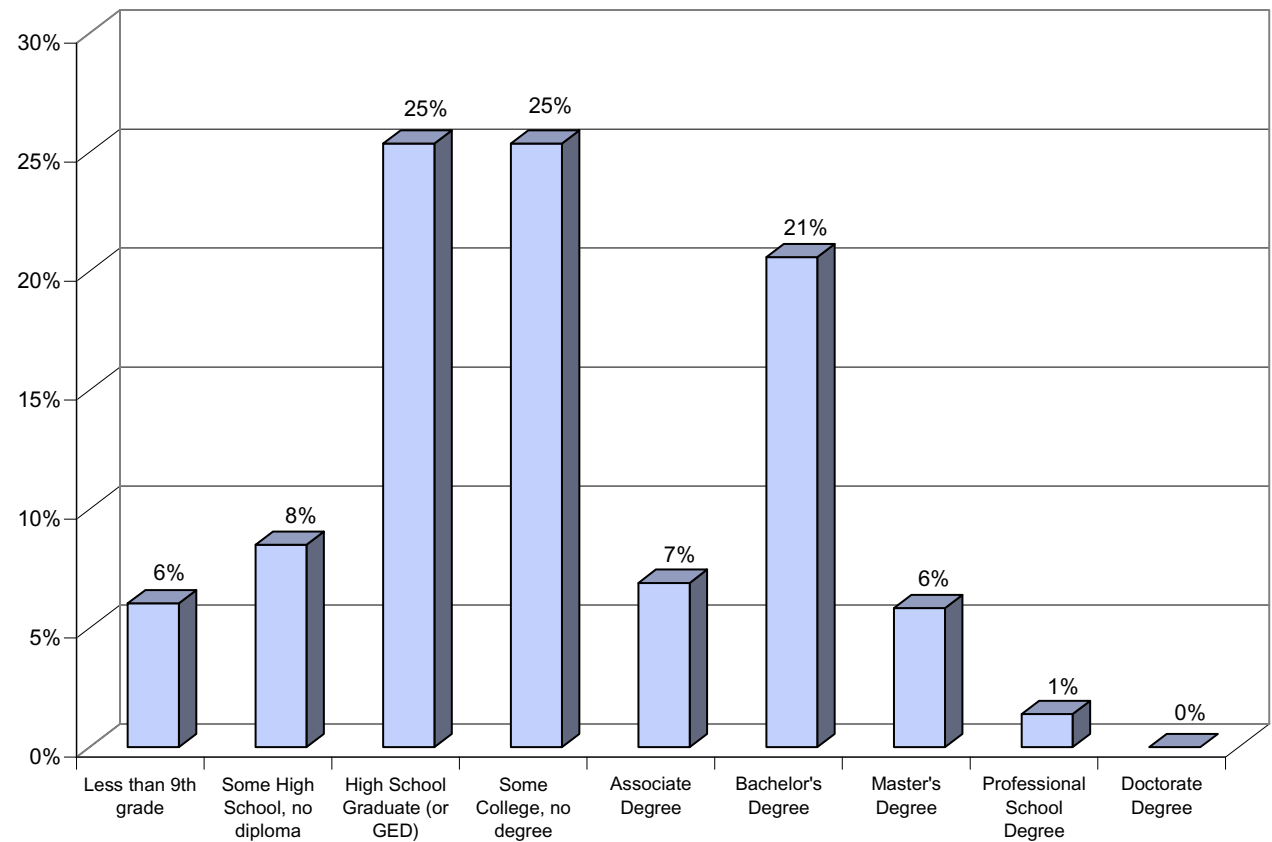


Figure 2-6: Educational Attainment, 2008

Source: Claritas



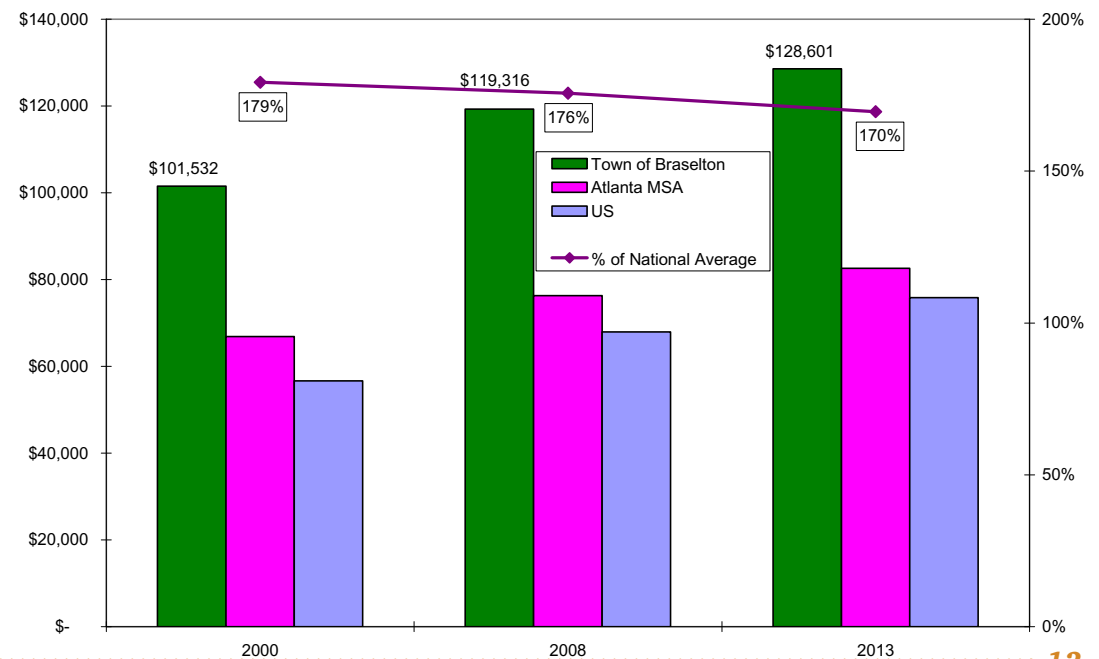
2.5 INCOME:

Per capita income is one of the most informative economic indicators regarding the relative economic position of communities. The per capita income in Braselton (\$45,018) is significantly higher than all of the surrounding counties, the Atlanta MSA, the state and the nation.

- In 2008, Braselton's per capita income is 74% higher than the national average of \$25,933.
- Braselton's average household income in 2008 was \$119,316. This figure is significantly higher than the household income of the Atlanta MSA (\$76,301), the state (\$66,192), and the nation (\$67,918).
- A large percentage (35%) of Braselton households fall into the income categories above \$100,000. This is much higher than the rates for the Atlanta MSA (22%), state (18%), and the nation (19%).
- Braselton's housing supply is overwhelmingly occupied by owners (89%), with renters making up a much smaller proportion (12%). The national average is 67% and 33%, respectively.

The Town of Braselton is fortunate to exhibit high levels of wealth. While this is evidence of a desirable community, it could also pose future challenges regarding jobs and housing opportunities for younger and less skilled workers.

Figures 2-7 & 2-8: Per Capita Income Trends, 2000-2013 & Average Household Income Trends, 2000-2013
Source: US Census Bureau, Claritas, Market + Main, Inc.



3.0 LAND USE:

Existing land use patterns within the Town of Braselton are focused around three nodes: historic and emerging activity centers. The historic town center, surrounding the intersection of Highways 124 and 53 in the southeast corner of town, includes a variety of historic commercial buildings along Highway 53 and a collection of civic buildings including the Town Hall and Police Station on Highway 53 and the newly constructed Braselton Library on Highway 124. Older, traditional single-family homes surround the historic downtown to the east.

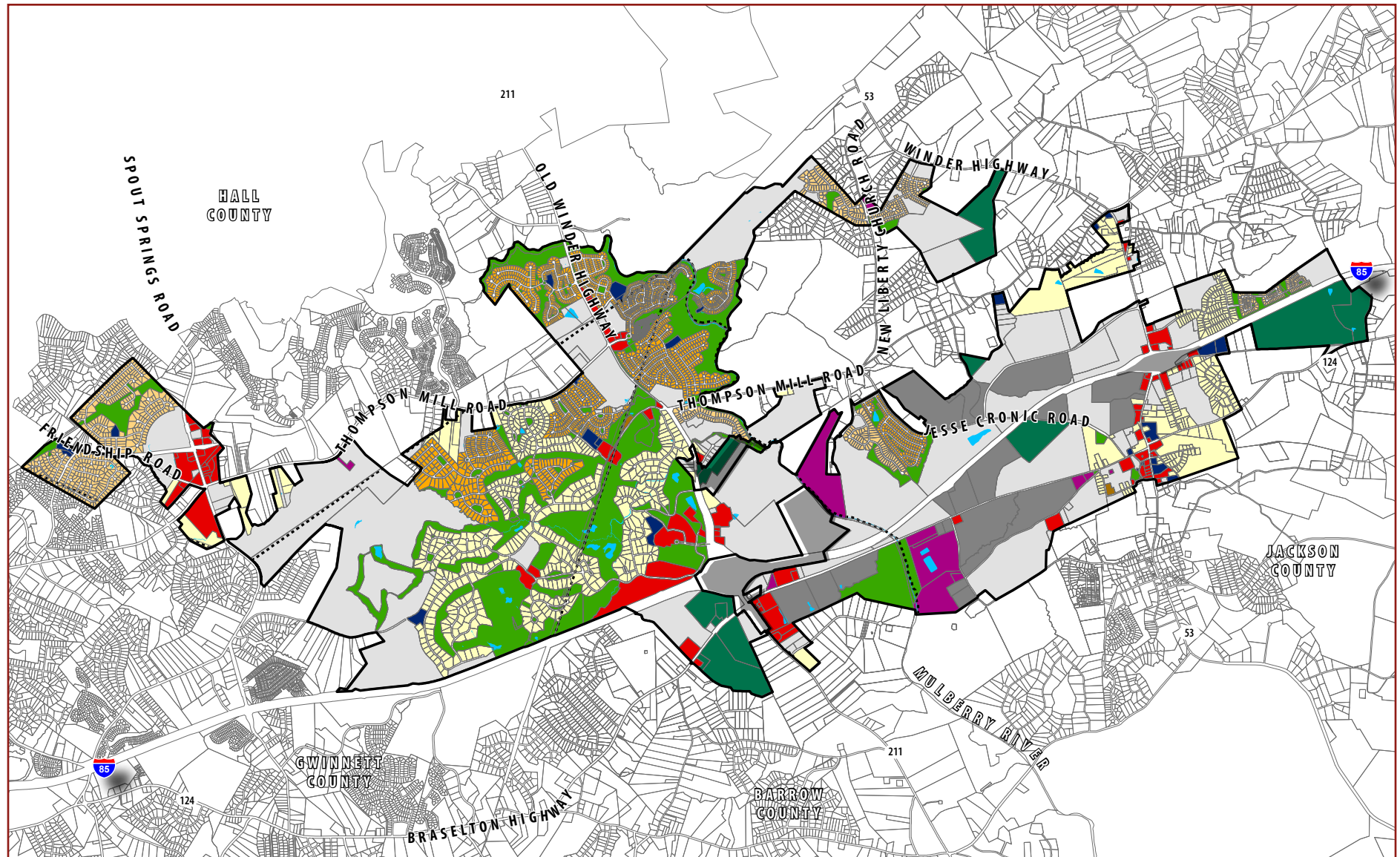
The Chateau Elan Activity Center has evolved around the Resort property over the last twenty years. In addition to the Winery and Resort, its spa, golf facilities, and high quality single-family neighborhoods, the Highway 211 corridor north of I-85 is dotted with suburban style retail centers and newly constructed single-family (both attached and detached) subdivisions. The Highway 211 corridor bridges three counties (Barrow, Gwinnett, and Hall).

The Highway 211 corridor south of I-85 is positioned as an emerging commercial center. However, there is limited development in the sector today beyond a newly constructed spec office project and industrial office/warehousing along the Highway 124 corridor.

The third emerging center within the town of Braselton is the crossroads of Thompson Mill Road and Spout Springs Road on the far western edge of the Town. The area includes several significant suburban-style retail centers and is surrounded by single family residential development.

As of 2008, approximately 1/3 of the town of Braselton remains undeveloped. A large majority of the undeveloped land in town is situated between Highway 211 and Highway 53 north of I-85. Residential development comprises almost





- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Low Density Single Family Residential (≤ 1.5 units/acre) | Multifamily Residential | Industrial | Vacant |
| Medium Density Single Family Residential (> 1.5 to < 2.5 units/acre) | Commercial/Office | Utilities | Water Bodies |
| High Density Single Family Residential (≥ 2.5 units/acre) | Institutional | Parks & Open Space | Town Limits |
| | Agricultural | County Lines | |

Figure 3-1: Existing Land Use



¼ of the town with more than half of that land being low density (less than 1.5 units per acre) single family residential.

The Town is comprised of approximately 8,000 total acres. There is limited land devoted to commercial uses (4% of total land area), but industrial uses (warehousing and distribution) occupy more than 7% of the town's land. The Town also has a few office facilities, comprising less than 9 acres. A series of PUD districts have been pursued over the last several years bring potential for additional commercial and office facilities integrated with other land uses in master planned developments.

The Town's 2023 future land use plan encourages specialized development around the historic downtown center in the form of Downtown Mixed Use, Downtown Historic Preservation and Downtown Traditional Neighborhood development. Further commercial/business development is illustrated in the future land use plan surrounding the town's two interchanges with I-85 at Highway 53 and Highway 211.

Other significant commercial development is shown at the intersection of Thompson Mill Road and Highway 211 north of Chateau Elan and surrounding the intersection of Thompson Mill Road and Spout Springs Road. The remainder of the future land use map projects residential development at three densities (Low, Medium, and High), light industrial/warehouse uses along Highway 124 and on either side of I-85 along Jessie Cronin Road; and an interconnected network of green spaces along the Mulberry River and associated creek beds.



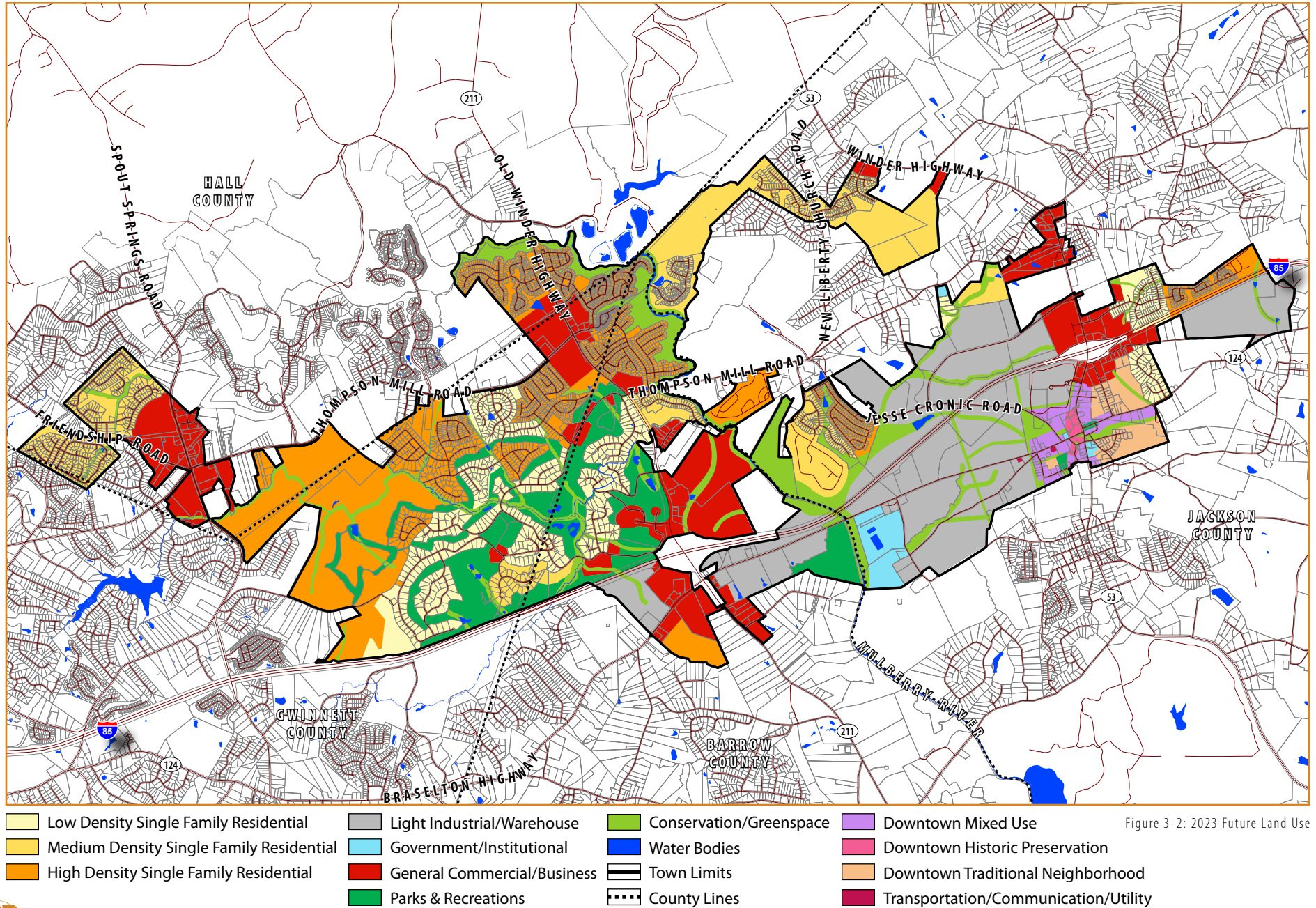


Figure 3-2: 2033 Future Land Use



3.1 ZONING:

Current zoning in the Town of Braselton is dominated by the Chateau Elan Planned Unit Development (PUD) and a significant manufacturing and distribution (M-D) districts along Highway 124 west and east of the historic downtown area.

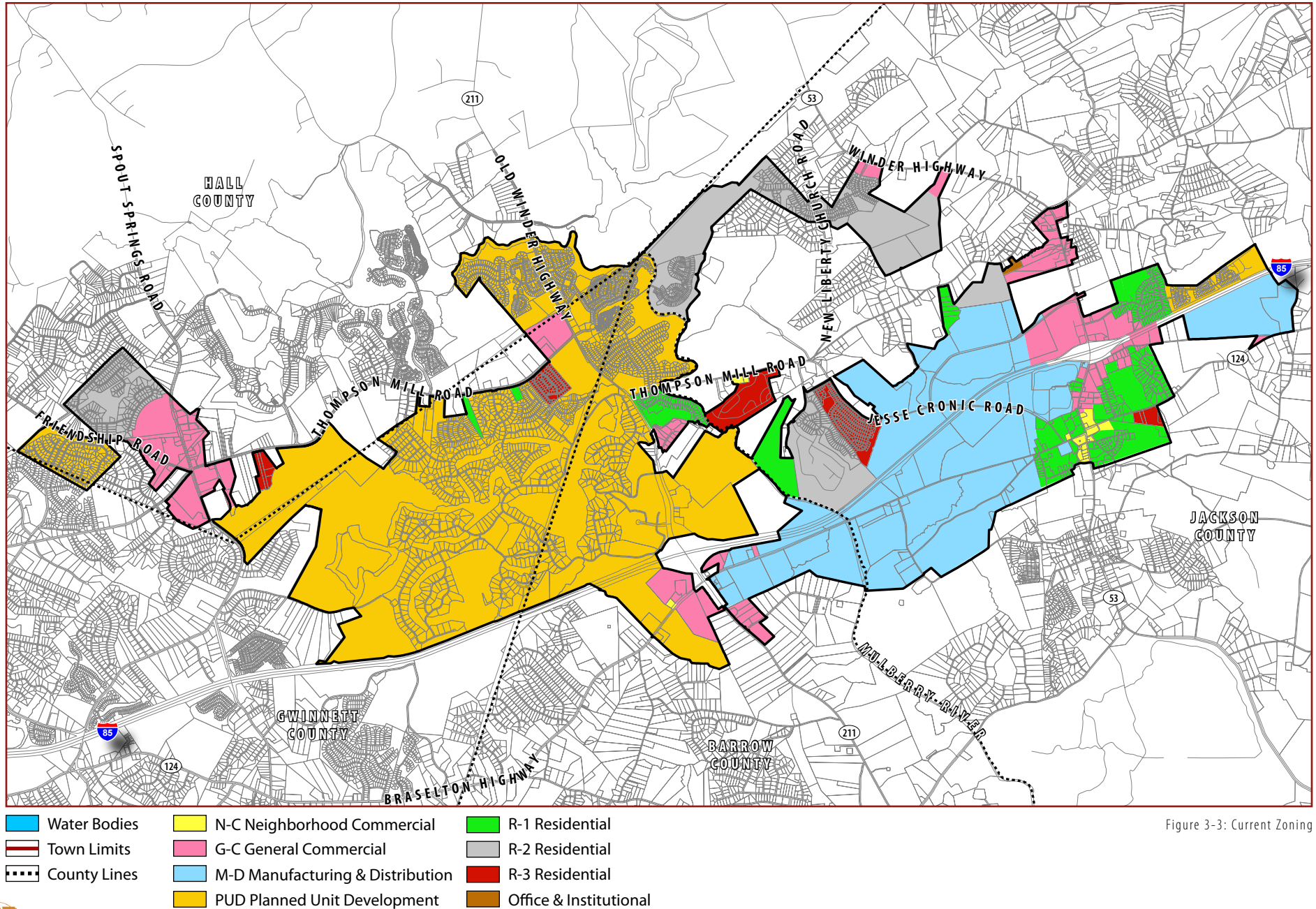
Neighborhood commercial districts surround the historic downtown area. General commercial districts are located around the interchange of Highway 53 at I-85, the south side of Highway 211 at I-85, the intersection of Thompson Mill and Highway 211, and the intersection of Thompson Mill and Spout Springs. Smaller commercial districts are located along Winder Highway / Highway 53, north of I-85.

Remaining zoning districts include three residential categories (R-1, R-2, and R-3) and Office-Industrial (O-I). The three districts vary in terms of allowable residential densities (lot sizes) and the accommodation of agriculture or livestock.

The Town employs zoning categories for Residential Multifamily (R-M), Manufactured Housing District (MHD), Downtown District (D-D), Business Park (B-P), Industrial (I-I), and Traditional Neighborhood (TND). However, these districts are not present on the zoning map as of October 2008.

The Town employs the use of three overlay districts: a Downtown Overlay, SR 211 Overlay, and SR 53 Overlay. The Downtown Overlay applies public space/street standards and development standards to the traditional downtown area and surrounding neighborhood. The two corridor overlays, likewise, apply design standards to the Highway 211 and 53 corridors and adjacent development to promote safety and encourage more consistent and harmonious design of the corridors and commensurate development.



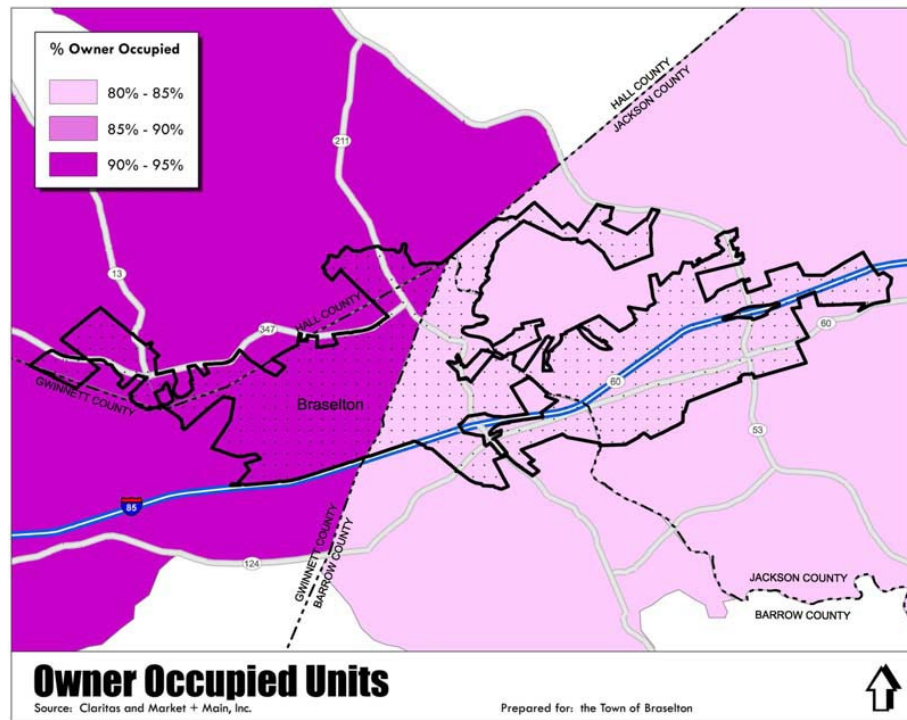


4.0 HOUSING:

Housing Tenure

Braselton's averages tenure characteristics (owner versus renter) stand in stark contrast to typical percentages. Braselton's housing supply is overwhelmingly occupied by owners (89%), with renters making up a much smaller proportion (12%). The national average is 67% and 33%, respectively.

All Braselton census tracts have owner-occupancy rates above 80%. The Gwinnett and Hall County census tracts are even higher, with owner-occupancy rates above 90%.



¹ Thematic maps consist of Census Tract Block Groups with Town of Braselton boundaries, as well as county lines, overlaid for illustrative purposes.



Household Size

Average household size in Braselton (2.65) is slightly below that of the MSA (2.71), slightly higher than the nation (2.58), and only negligibly higher than the state's (2.64).

There are fewer single-person households in Braselton (18.1%) than the MSA (22.7%), the state (23.7%), and the nation (26.2%). This is important to note, as many times it can be an indicator that an area is more attractive to families than to singles, such as young professionals.

Housing Structure Age

As would be expected in any fast growing area, Braselton's housing stock is largely recently constructed. The median year of construction for housing in the town is 2000, which stands in stark contrast to the MSA (1988), the state (1985), and the nation (1975). The chart below provides a graphic depiction of the high percentage of homes built in recent years. Almost 60% of housing units were constructed between 1999 and 2007.

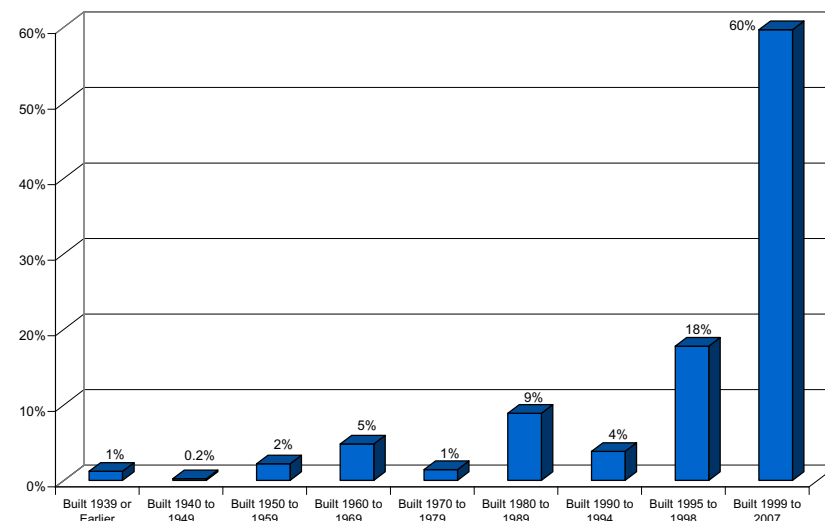


Figure 4-1: Housing Units by Year Structure Built, 2008

Source: Claritas

² Thematic maps consist of Census Tract Block Groups with Town of Braselton boundaries, as well as county lines, overlaid for illustrative purposes.



5.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES:

The adequacy and capacity of community services and facilities are critical to maintaining a high quality of life. Braselton has recently invested in several new capital improvements to upgrade existing resources and prepare for anticipated growth. In the past two years, the Town has opened a new library, a new planning/public utility facility, and a new police department as well as opened a new recreational trail along the Mulberry River. The Town is also actively pursuing the expansion of its water and wastewater systems.

Although much progress has been made, the Town has several needs it will have to meet as the town continues to keep pace with anticipated growth over the next 20 years. Recent slowdowns in the economy provide the Town with an opportunity to strategically prepare for the future. This section briefly summarizes Braselton's existing community facilities and resources and summarizes anticipated needs.

5.1 PARKS AND RECREATION:

While parks and recreation services are a function of the Counties that make up the Town of Braselton, the Town has made a concerted effort over the last several years to add and enhance community open spaces. The Town's existing and planned parks and recreation facilities are displayed in **Figure 5-1** and described on the following page.

According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), community's should seek to provide a minimum of 5-10 acres of park space per 1,000 residents. Using Braselton's projected 2028 population of around 16,000, the Town currently exceeds these goals (the 20-year target would be around 157 acres of park space).



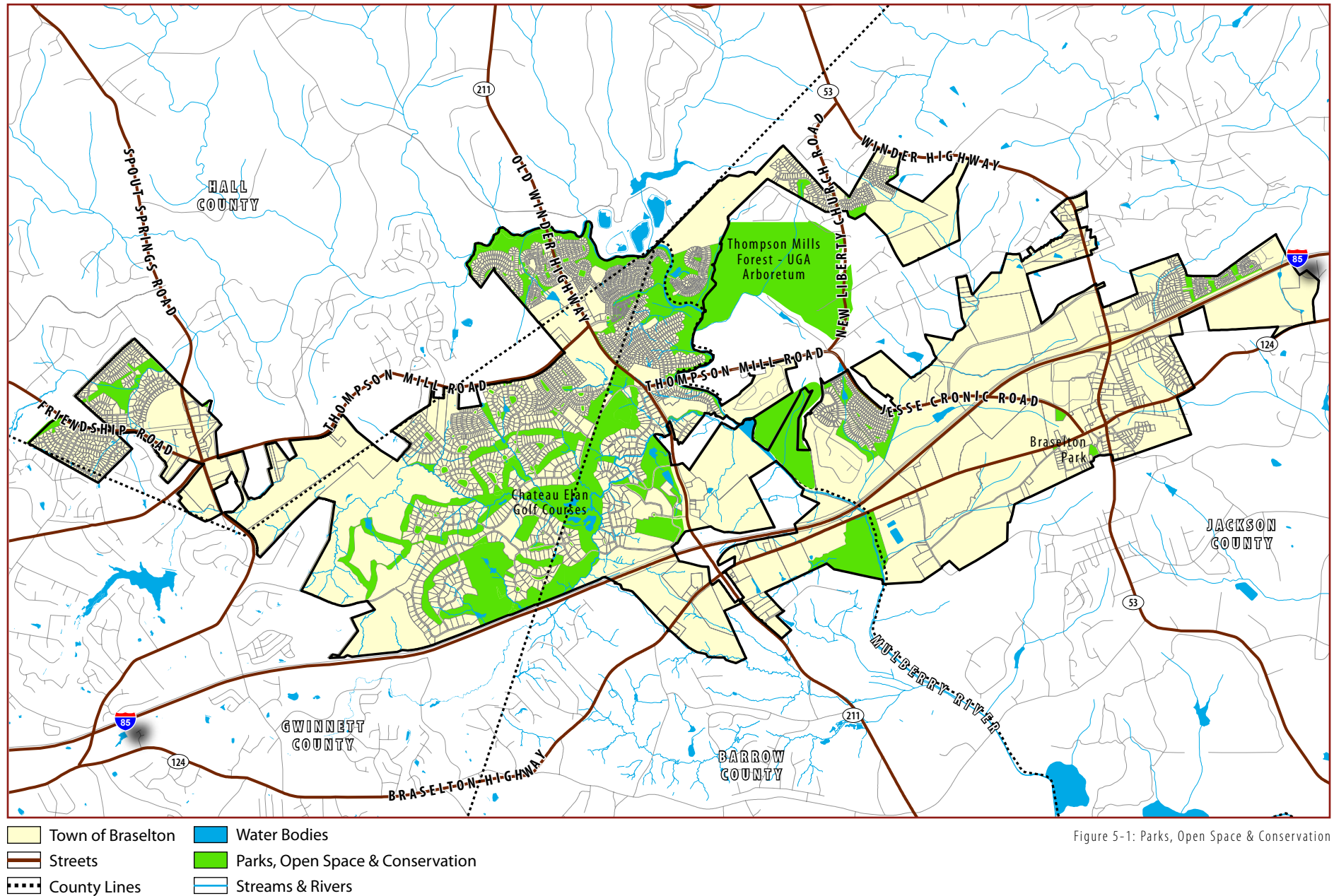


Figure 5-1: Parks, Open Space & Conservation



RESOURCE	ACREAGE
Braselton Park	2
Riverwalk	227+
Planned multi-use facility at SR 124 and Mulberry River	71
TOTAL ACREAGE	300+

Table 5-2: Braselton Parks and Recreation Supply & Goals

Note: SR124/Mulberry River Facility also part of Mulberry Riverwalk

Figure does not include State Arboretum of Georgia just beyond Town Limits

Braselton Park

Braselton's central park is located on Harrison Street near downtown. It contains two tennis courts and an open recreation area. The park is a little over 2 acres in size.

Riverwalk

The Riverwalk along the Mulberry River currently encompasses 300+ acres of park/open space. The Town plans to acquire additional acreage along the River as opportunities arise. The Town has completed the first phases of the Riverwalk, extending from Hwy 211 to just beyond Thompson Mill Road. The trail includes foot bridges, perennial gardens, and picnic areas for public use.

Planned Green Spaces

Multi-Use Facility

A multi-use recreational facility is planned for the intersection of Hwy 124 and Mulberry River in Barrow County. The complex is expected to contain a soccer complex on 71 acres of the Town's property. The Town has signed an agreement with the County to construct this facility.

Town Green

The Town is in the process of acquiring property on Hwy 124 for a town green.



Other Public and Private Recreational Resources

Braselton community members have access to several public golf courses at the Chateau Elan Resort and Winery. Racetrack facilities, including Road Atlanta and the Georgia International Speedway, are also a local attraction. Thompson Mills Forest, just outside the town limits, was designated the State's official arboretum in 1991 and is also a significant area asset. Lake Lanier, approximately 20 miles from Braselton, also serves as a recreational attraction. Braselton residents also utilize numerous county parks and recreational services outside of the Town limits offered by Gwinnett, Hall, Barrow, and Jackson counties.

5.2 SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION:

Residents of Braselton are served by four county school districts, depending upon their county of residence. Each district is responsible for insuring that educational facilities and services are available to Braselton residents. There are currently no public schools within the Town Limits of Braselton. Braselton residents are served by the county facilities displayed in **Figure 5-3**.

5.3 POLICE:

The Braselton Police Department provides law enforcement services within the town's boundaries. The staff is dedicated to community policing and actively engages in community events to increase presence of Neighborhood Watch Programs, holding a biannual "Picnic with the Police" in neighborhoods. This tradition is an invaluable opportunity for community members to develop relationships with law enforcement personnel. The Department has strong relationships with local, state and federal agencies. The Department runs regular state programs and has recently developed a strong identity theft program through partnerships with area businesses (identity theft is one of



the town's most prevalent crimes). Personnel have also received recognition for curtailing DUIs.

Between 2006 and 2007, the number of calls received by local police declined by 12 percent, from 16,150 to 14,248. Numbers suggest that this trend will continue with the Department receiving only 10,504 calls between January and November 2008.

The Department, managed by the chief and assistant chief, is staffed by 15 personnel, including:

- Chief
- Assistant chief
- Lieutenant
- Three sergeants
- Two Detectives
- Seven Officers

Since July of 2006, the Braselton Police Department has occupied a new 14,000 square foot building at 5040 Highway 53. The building was designed for expansion, and there are no anticipated needs for more facilities over the planning period. The Department also dedicated a new firing range in February 2008, which has been used by local law enforcement organizations as well as members of the FBI, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, and Department of Homeland Security.



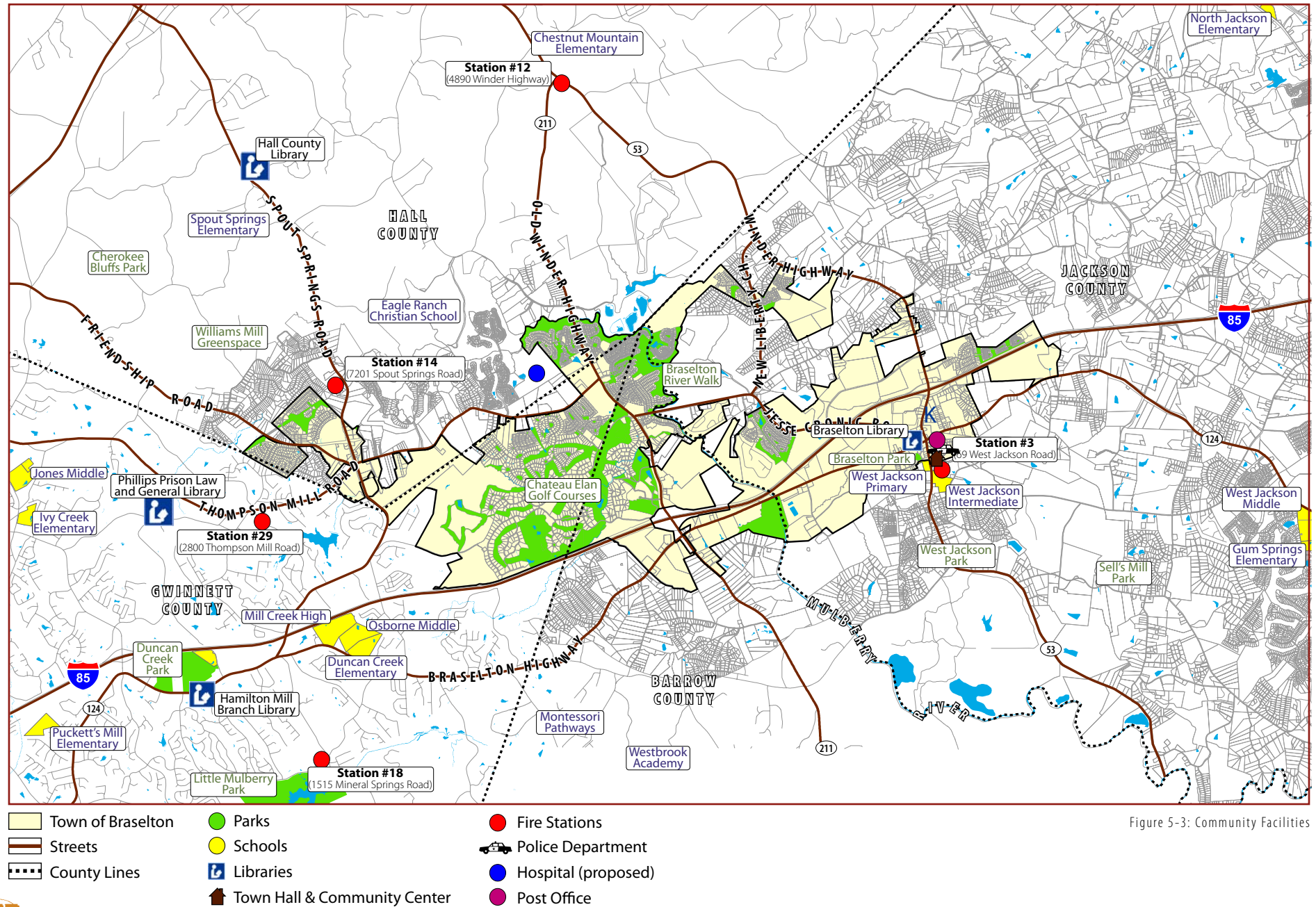


Figure 5-3: Community Facilities



5.4 FIRE PROTECTION AND EMS:

Fire protection and emergency management services are provided to the area through the Barrow, Gwinnett, Hall, and Jackson County Fire Departments. A number of inter-jurisdictional agreements are in place to provide overlapping coverage and ensure coverage and faster response times to emergencies.

The West Jackson Fire Department provides service to the Jackson County portion of the Town with its station at 69 West Jackson Road. Other area stations serving Braselton include: Station 5 in Barrow County, Stations 12 and 14 in Hall County, and Station 18 in Gwinnett County. A standard method of rating the sufficiency of local fire service is the Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating. The ISO rating of a community has a direct effect on the insurance premiums that individuals pay on their homes and especially on commercial buildings. Generally, the lower the ISO rating on a scale of 1 to 10, the better services is and consequently the lower the insurance rates are. Both Gwinnett County and Hall County have an ISO rating of four. The West Jackson Fire Department and the Barrow County Fire Department have an ISO rating of six and five respectively. West Jackson's last ISO review was in 1993 and will be updated in 2009.

Emergency Management Services are provided by all fire departments in respective counties except the West Jackson Fire Department. County wide EMS services for Jackson County are provided by the Jackson County Fire Department. Barrow County will open a new 911 center and new fire headquarters in February 2009, just east of Winder. This new center should improve EMS service to Braselton residents. Hazardous Materials assistance is currently provided by Gwinnett and Hall Counties, but Barrow anticipates adding this service as a part of its long-range goals.



5.5 PUBLIC UTILITIES:

Braselton manages its own water and wastewater system and provides service to a 24 square mile area including several neighboring communities. The Braselton Water and Wastewater system operates separately from general government operations and is financially independent.

Water Supply and Treatment:

Braselton obtains water from a series of wells and purchases water on a wholesale basis from Barrow County, Gwinnett County, and Jackson County. The Town's current water supply has enabled it to grow and produce additional revenue. During fiscal year 2007, the Town's water customers grew from 3,300 to 3,750.

Braselton water demand estimates (completed in 2003) project a 2020 demand over 4 million gallons per day. However, recent slowdowns in the economy and updated population/growth estimates (see population and economic development section) suggest that these projections, particularly in the short-term, are likely high. Current peak demand is around 2 million gallons per day. It should be noted that recent droughts in the North Georgia region, in combination with the introduction of a statewide water plan, will require Braselton to be actively involved in inter-jurisdictional coordination of the region's water resources.

Since 2003, the Town's available supply of water has been 3.4 million gallons per day. However, a recent contract with Gwinnett County has added another million gallons per day in permitted wells for a total capacity over 4 million gallons per day. **Figure 5-4** displays the Town's water service infrastructure.



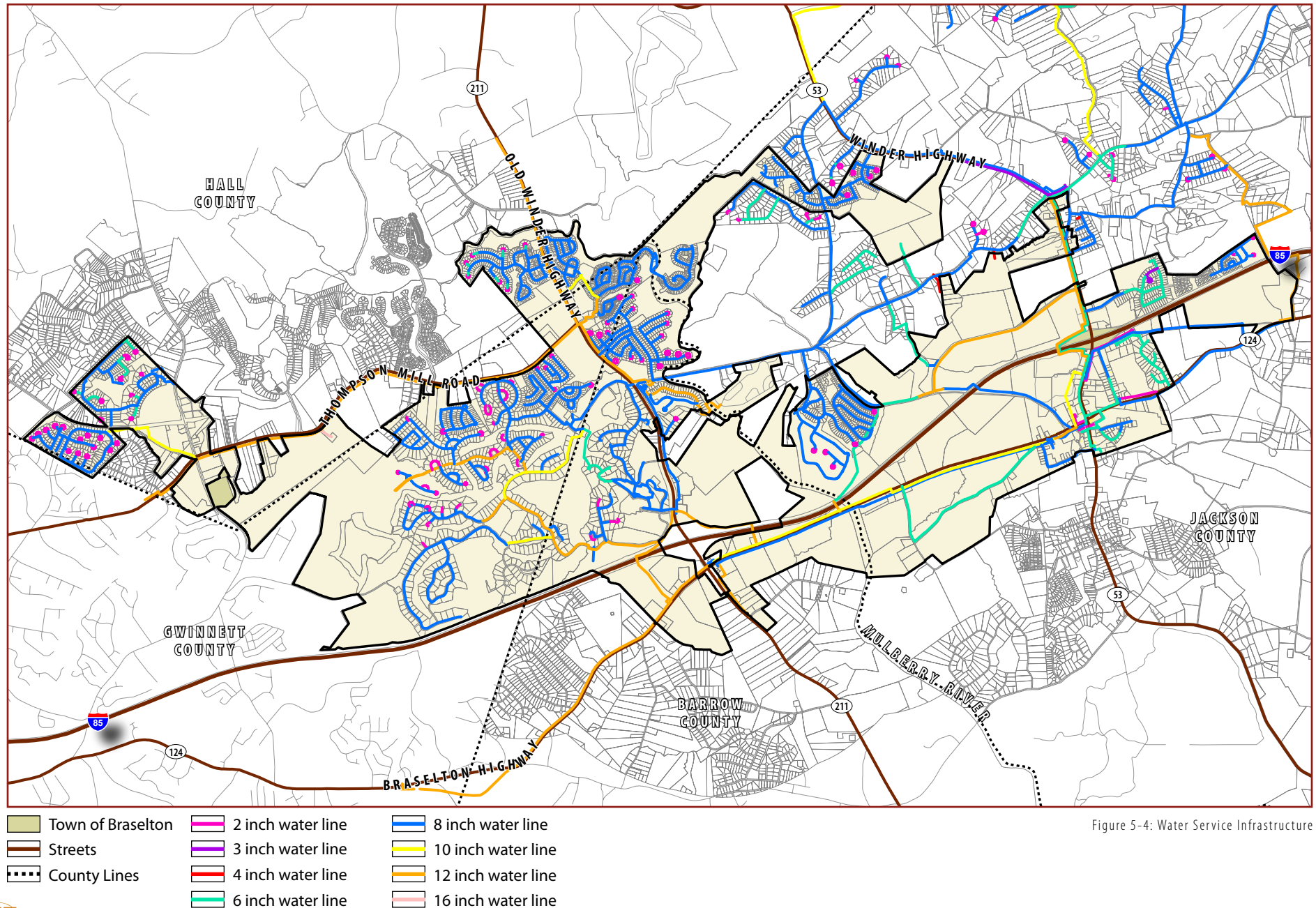


Figure 5-4: Water Service Infrastructure



The Town has the ability to pursue increased water supply, including:

- Well-drilling program
- Application for a water withdrawal permit from the Georgia Environmental Protection Department, to withdraw its own water
- Continued investigation of the town's independent surface water supplies and potential use

Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment:

Wastewater is treated by the Braselton Water Reclamation Facility, which currently handles an average of 850,000 gallons of sewerage per day. Recent facility improvements represent a major investment in the town's sewerage capacity. Braselton's wastewater customers grew from about 1,800 in 2006 to 2,200 in 2007, an increase of 22 percent. Until recently, the facility had the capacity to treat 1.27 million gallons per day. New facility upgrades now allow treatment of up to 2.54 million gallons per day (MGD).

The Town is a model in water reuse with an urban water reuse program that maximizes existing water availability. Treated wastewater is cleaned by urban re-use standards and then used for irrigation. Current expansions to the facility include the construction of three new buildings and the installation of new concrete holding tanks. The treatment center sends approximately 200,000 gallons a day of re-use water to Chateau Elan for irrigation of its golf courses. Braselton has recently built a reuse water storage tank on Thompson Mill Road.

The Town has already identified uses for 2.3 MGD, and as a result, is planning for future needs. Braselton plans to expand the Water Reclamation Facility to 6.0 MGD by June 2011. The proposal is currently under review as a Development of Regional Impact by the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center. These improvements will be funded by sewer tap fees, revenue bonds and a low interest loan from the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority. Braselton



has agreed to provide 2.5 MGD of sewer capacity to the Town of Oakwood in Hall County by 2010. Recently, Braselton agreed to allow Hall County to provide sewer service to two districts within the Town limits, Village at Deaton Creek and Medical Plaza 1, the latter of which is part of the new medical complex in southern Hall County.

5.6 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES:

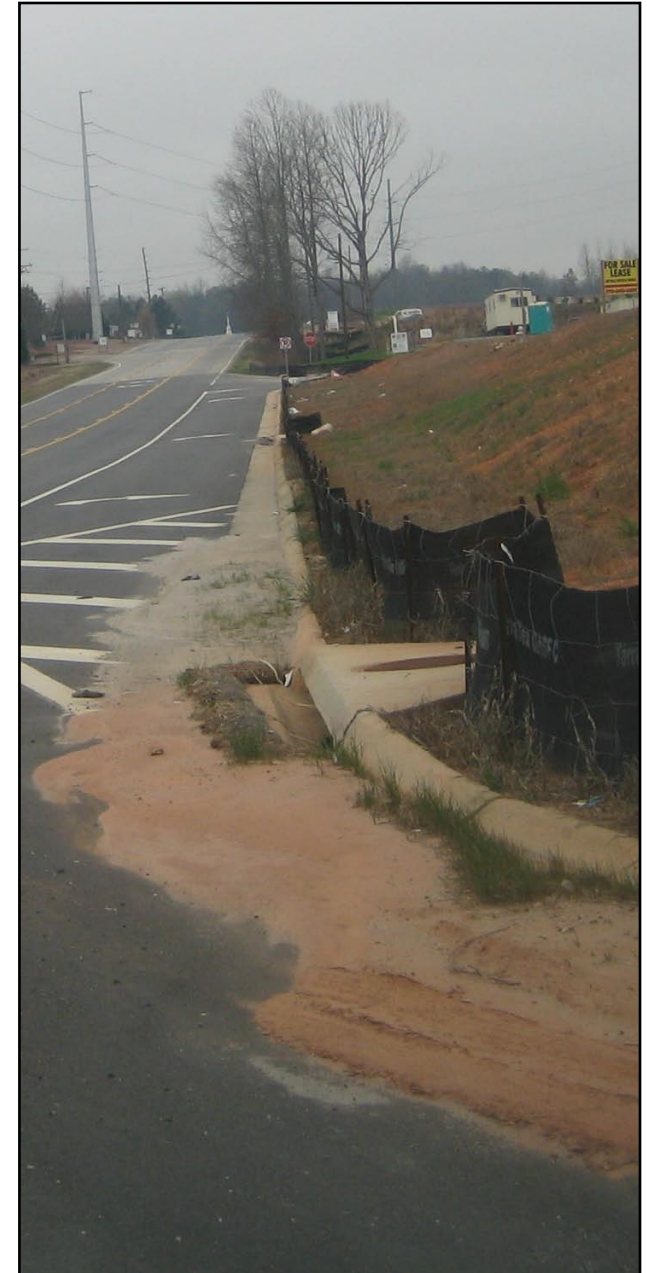
The Town of Braselton currently does not collect solid waste. Local homeowners and businesses contract with private haulers to collect solid waste.

5.7 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT:

Stormwater management is an important component to local planning. As development occurs, the percentage of impervious surfaces increase and increased water run-off occurs. This run-off can lead to erosion, flooding, and increased pollutants in the water supply. Increasing development in Braselton and stricter state regulations makes it increasingly important that stormwater management is adequately addressed. Per local agreements, Braselton is responsible for all stormwater management within its boundaries and has adopted a stormwater management system through its development regulations. These regulations and their management currently meet state regulations and the town's storm water infrastructure is relatively new and effective.

5.8 SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY:

The Town is a participant under four different Service Delivery Strategies as its geographic boundaries cross over into four different counties (Hall, Jackson,



Gwinnett, and Barrow). The Counties of Barrow, Gwinnett, and Jackson were still in the process of updating and negotiating the Service Delivery Strategies with its municipalities as of October 2009. The update to the Hall County Service Delivery Strategy has been completed.

5.9 LIBRARY:

The Braselton Library is part of the Piedmont Regional Library System, a three county system with 11 member branches. In September 2006, Braselton completed a new 6,100 square foot library facility, located along Highway 124 west of the Historic Downtown. Funding for the facility was provided through Jackson County and Impact Fees. The library has strong community support and is operated by the Friends of the Braselton-West Jackson Library. As of September 2008, the Braselton Branch provided over 8,800 media materials to the public, including books, audio and video tapes, magazines, CDs, and DVDs. The Piedmont Regional Library System as a whole boasted nearly 47,000 materials at that time.

5.10 HOSPITALS:

Braselton currently does not have a hospital within its town boundaries. Gainesville-based Northeast Georgia Medical Center has plans to open a 100 bed hospital on Thompson Mill Road in Braselton around the year 2012. Medical Plaza I, the first phase of this development, opened in September 2008. The neighboring communities of Winder, Commerce, Athens, Lawrenceville, and Gainesville provide access to hospital/medical services for Braselton residents. The closest, open hospital near Braselton is the Barrow Regional Medical Center in Winder.



6.0 TRANSPORTATION

The Town of Braselton has benefited from its proximity to I-85, giving it easy access to jobs, shopping and cultural opportunities throughout the Atlanta region. Unfortunately, aside from the interstate, few major improvements to what has historically been a rural road system have been made. The Town is currently very auto-dependent. It has no railroad, airport, local transit, and an incomplete pedestrian network. It does have the beginnings of a bicycle network with its greenway, but much will have to be done to link this facility to the rest of the community. The following section briefly summarizes Braselton's existing and proposed transportation system and expected needs in the coming years.

6.1 CIRCULATION FRAMEWORK

Besides I-85, four highways pass through Braselton, state highways 53, 124, 211, and 347. There are two interstate exits within the Town (exits 126 and 129). Exit 126 is within Barrow County and grants access to SR 211 at the doorstep of Chateau Elan, while Exit 129 is within Jackson County and provides access to SR 53, a major truck route to Gainesville to the north.

Most of the roads within the town are 2-lane facilities that criss-cross the city along ridgelines. There is no traditional "grid," even within the downtown core. Major townwide collector roads that provide access to the state highway system include Ednaville Road, Jesse Cronic Road, and Maddox Road.

One circulation issue that literally lies at the heart of the town is the intersection of SR 53 and SR 124. SR 124 west of SR 53 (Broadway Avenue) does not directly align with SR 124 east of SR 53 (Davis Street). The two intersections of SR 124 lie a block apart, forcing through traffic on SR 124 to travel a short distance on SR 53 causing a bottleneck. The Downtown Master Plan called for realignment of this intersection south of Broadway Avenue (see Figure 6-1).

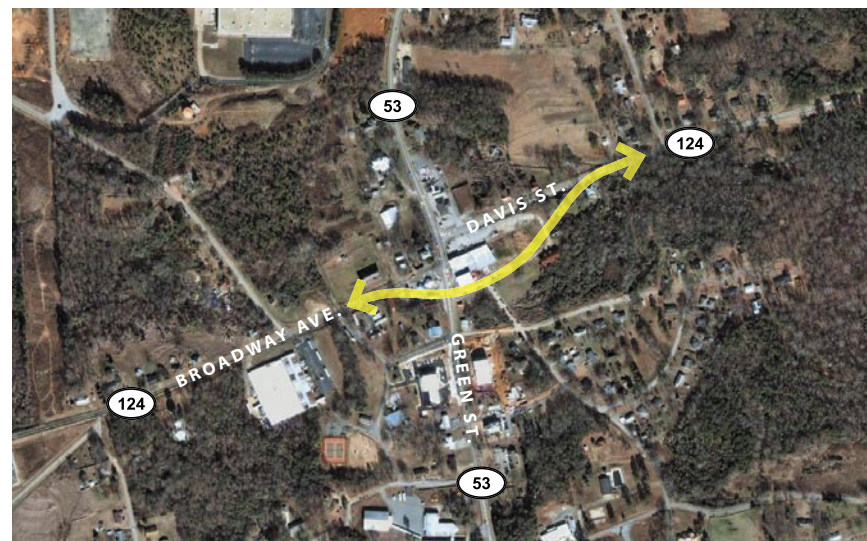


Figure 6-1: The Downtown Master Plan called for a realignment of Hwy 124

Many of the new developments in the city incorporate a traditional suburban road pattern. New subdivisions are insulated from surrounding developments, and commercial developments are spread out along major arterial roadways. This pattern forces most of the traffic directly onto the major arterials and highways, with few, if any, alternative routes.

Another issue resulting from this rural/suburban development pattern is the lack of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. There is no comprehensive inventory of existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the Town, but it is generally recognized that significant improvements need to be made if the community waits to break its dependence on the automobile. In recent years the Town has made giant strides toward improving its pedestrian and bicycle facility inventory through the construction of the Riverwalk along the Mulberry River (see description in the Community Facilities section). The community's next challenge will be to link that new facility to other areas of the Town to improve non-auto mobility.



6.2 ROAD HIERARCHY

Roadway Type	Urban Areas (Gwinnett and Hall)	Rural Areas (Barrow and Jackson)
Principal Arterial – serve substantial statewide and interstate trips as defined by high mileage or volume. Links major urban centers over 50,000 in population	Urban Interstate Principal Arterial – I-85	Rural Interstate Principal Arterial – I-85
Minor Arterial – link other cities, large towns, and other traffic generators.	Urban Minor Arterial – SR 347, SR 124, SR 211, and Spout Springs Road (north of SR 347)	Rural Minor Arterial – SR 53
Collector Street – primarily serve local traffic by channeling local traffic to arterial roadways and local destinations.	Urban Collector Street – Spout Springs Road (south of SR 347)	Rural Major Collector Street – SR 124, SR 211, SR 332 Rural Minor Collector Street – Thompson Mill Road and Jesse Cronin Road
Local Road – serves local traffic only	Urban Local Road	Rural Local Road

Figure 6-2: Road Functional Classification

Following Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) groups roads by functional classification, according to the road's character and function within the overall highway network. Character is defined primary by location. Braselton sits on the edge of the Atlanta metropolitan area, so roads within Gwinnett or Hall Counties are considered urban roadways and roads within Barrow or Jackson Counties are classified as rural roadways. Function is defined by whether the roadway is intended to primarily provide mobility for through traffic or access to local property. For example, arterials are designed to provide maximum mobility but limited or no access to local property. Local roads at the other end of the classification spectrum provide access to local property, but with limited mobility to through traffic. The table below lists the different functional classifications as defined by FHWA with the Town.

Most of the roadways within Braselton are local serving, totaling approximately 66% of the total lane miles in the Town. Figure 6-2 illustrates the functional classification of the Town's roads.

6.3 TRAFFIC COUNTS (1997-2004)

Route Name	Station No.	1997 Count	2001 Count	2004 Count	Annual Percent Change
SR 53	259 (south of SR 124)	7,870	9,939	10,610	4.9%
SR 53	260 (south of I-85)	9,984	10,325	11,760	2.5%
SR 124	120 (east of SR 211)	1,894	2,636	6,060	31.4%
SR 124	264 (west of Jesse Cronin Rd)	1,791	3,693	5,430	29.0%
SR 211	149 (north of I-85)	5,649	7,918	17,390	29.7%
SR 211	234 (south of SR 347)	6,984	8,500	11,900	10.0%

Figure 6-3: Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)

The highest volume of traffic within the Town of Braselton passes through on I-85. In 2004, the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) on I-85 just west of SR 211 in Gwinnett County was over 72,630. On the other side of the town, the AADT on I-85 just east of SR 53 was 54,930. This indicates that 17,700 trips on average exit I-85 onto either SR 211 or SR 53. As a result most of the traffic congestion in Braselton can be found on these two state routes. The table below, indicates that the 2004 AADT on SR 211 and SR 53 were both over 10,000 trips. A general rule of thumb is that a highway can reasonably handle around 10,000 trips per lane, or 20,000 AADT on a two-lane road. By this general measure these roads are still operating within their design capacity, but given the increase in traffic in recent years, that capacity is rapidly approaching its limit.

What is most notable in this table is the annual percent change in AADT on SR 124 and SR 211. SR 124 has on average experienced a 31% increase in traffic every year between 1997 and 2004, jumping from handling a low 1,894 trips in 1997 to over 6,000 trips in 2004. The most notable increase in traffic in terms of net change and volume to capacity ratio is SR 211, just north of I-85 in front of Chateau Elan. The segment of roadway is quickly approaching its design capacity in handling over 17,000 average trips daily.

Figure 6-3 illustrates the AADT along the major roadways of the Town.



Road	Project No.	Project	Completion Date
SR 53 from Hoschton City limits to SR 124 (Jackson County)	0009097	Pedestrian improvements	2009
SR 211 and SR 124 Intersection Improvements (Barrow County)	0001038	Adding left and right turn lanes and thru lanes on all approaches.	2010
I-85 from Hamilton Mill Road to SR 211 (Gwinnett and Barrow Counties)	110610	Widen from 4 to 6 lanes, 6.3 miles	2012
SR 53 from I-85 to SR 211 (Jackson and Hall Counties)	132860	Widen from 2 to 4 lanes	Long Range
I-85 from SR 211 to SR 53 (Barrow and Jackson Counties)	110620	Widen from 4 to 6 lanes, 3.3 miles	Long Range
SR 211 from 347 to the proposed alignment of the Winder West Bypass near Cedar Creek (Barrow County)	0007830	Widen from 2 to 4 lanes, 6.5 miles	Long Range
SR 211 from SR 53 to SR 347 (Hall County)	0007233	Widen from 2 to 4 lanes on new alignment	Long Range
SR 124 from Gwinnett County to Jackson County lines (Barrow County)	0007833	Widen from 2 to 4 lanes	Long Range
SR 53 from I-85 to Tap Wood Road	0008434	Widen from 2 to 4 lanes	Long Range

Figure 6-4: Planned Improvements to Transportation Facilities

6.4 PROPOSED PLANS

The Town does not operate its own Transportation Department, nor does it have any locally programmed transportation improvements to local roads. The Georgia Department of Transportation operates and maintains the state routes that run through the town, and there are several planned improvements to these facilities. These projects are outlined in the table below and are illustrated in Figure 6-4.

In addition to these programmed projects, the City has also identified the need for realignment of the SR 53 and SR 124 intersection, and the widening and realignment of Thompson Mill Road between SR 211 and Spout Springs Road. There has also been discussion of adding another interchange with I-85 off of Jesse Cronin Road, but no such plan has been programmed and any

improvements to I-85 are currently long-range. The Downtown Master Plan also recommended several connectivity improvements to in the downtown area (aside from the realignment of SR 124), including:

- The development of a new bypass road to take traffic off of SR 53 and move it around the center of town and provide better access to the industrial properties.
- Move the existing Zion Church Road intersection to the south of SR 53 to align with the proposed bypass.
- Extend Pincrest Lane south to Lakeshore Drive.
- Extend Lakeshore Drive to intersect with Maddox Road.
- The construction of a system of interconnected greenways along existing stream corridors and major utility rights-of-way.

Although none of these projects are currently programmed, there is overall community interest and support for them.

6.5 STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Good access to I-85

The town features a number of major highways (53, 211 and 124) that provide easy access to I-85 and surrounding jobs, shopping and cultural opportunities. While land is still available on either side of I-85, the community should continue to support improvements to parallel routes such as SR 124 and Thompson Mill Road to alleviate congestion on the interstate and provide greater connectivity.

Opportunities to improve downtown traffic circulation and connectivity

With the recent redevelopment of downtown and proposed transportation improvements to local state routes, there is an opportunity to divert truck traffic away from downtown and create a more pedestrian friendly environment in the downtown area. Bicycle connections to the new Riverwalk and western



side of town need to be made to reduce local based auto trips. Downtown truck traffic can significantly be reduced with the realignment of Zion Church Road and the construction of a downtown SR 53 bypass.

Official long range thoroughfare plan

In an effort to improve connectivity the Town should consider adopting an official long range thoroughfare plan that identifies potential and desired connecting streets to guide local development decisions with regards to the dedication of right-of-way. In this manner, the right-of-way for future local streets can be obtained and preserved for future expansion of the local street network. This map should identify future greenway and pedestrian connections as well.

6.6 WEAKNESSES AND THREATS

Increased traffic congestion

The town has witnessed an increase in traffic congestion along state routes in recent years. In particular, SR 211 and 124 have exhibited traffic growth rates that indicate the need for road improvements. The community has also expressed concern over a perceived increase in truck traffic along SR 53, particularly between Braselton Parkway to the north and SR 124 to the south. A more detailed study is needed to investigate how to better-manage and reduce potential conflicts between automobiles and truck traffic in this area.

Lack of a traditional road grid cross-town connectivity

The lack of traditional street grid or even a tight network of interconnect local streets magnifies traffic congestion along the arterial road network. Interconnectivity between developments is sorely lacking resulting in numerous access points along major routes. Travel speeds along SR 53 and SR 211 can be high and unsafe, particular when through-traffic is forced to share the road with slower local traffic.

Lack of bicycle facilities

The town has an opportunity to expand upon the success of its Greenway by building pedestrian and bicycle connections to this new facility. To support this, however, additional bicycle facilities need to be constructed throughout the town. Bicycle routes and trails between the downtown area and Chateau Elan, for instance, are particularly needed.

Lack of Transportation Funding

Funds for needed transportation improvements are currently in short supply statewide. If the numerous transportation improvements needed in the town are going to be constructed, serious consideration needs to be given to identifying local sources of funds for such efforts. The Town also lacks any local Transportation Department, so consideration should also be given to forming a dedicated branch of the local government to deal specifically with local transportation needs.



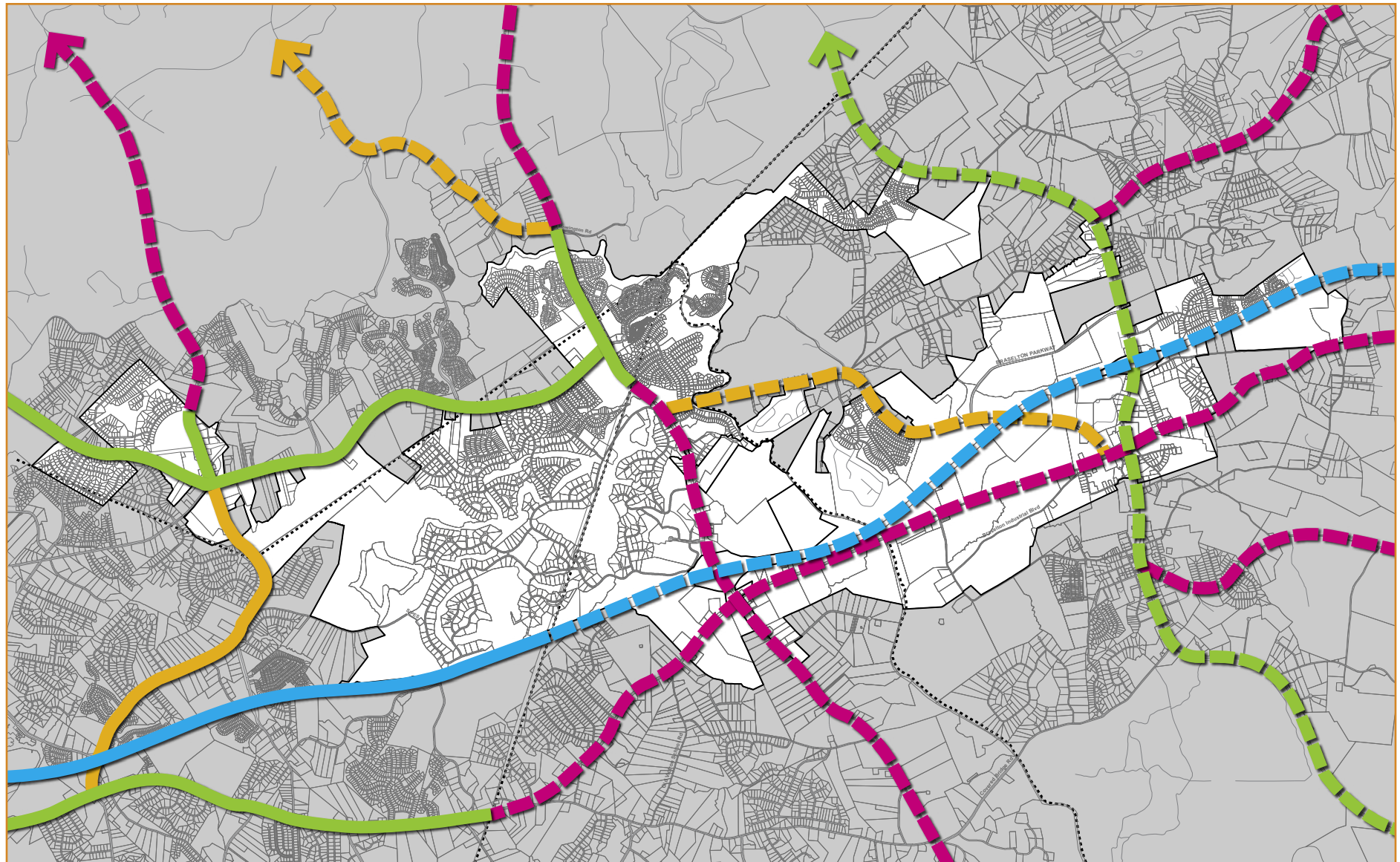


Figure 6-5: Road Functional Classification Map

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| — Town Limits | Urban Interstate Principal Arterial | Rural Interstate Principal Arterial |
| County Lines | Urban Minor Arterial | Rural Minor Arterial |
| | Urban Collector Street | Rural Major Collector |
| | | Rural Minor Collector |



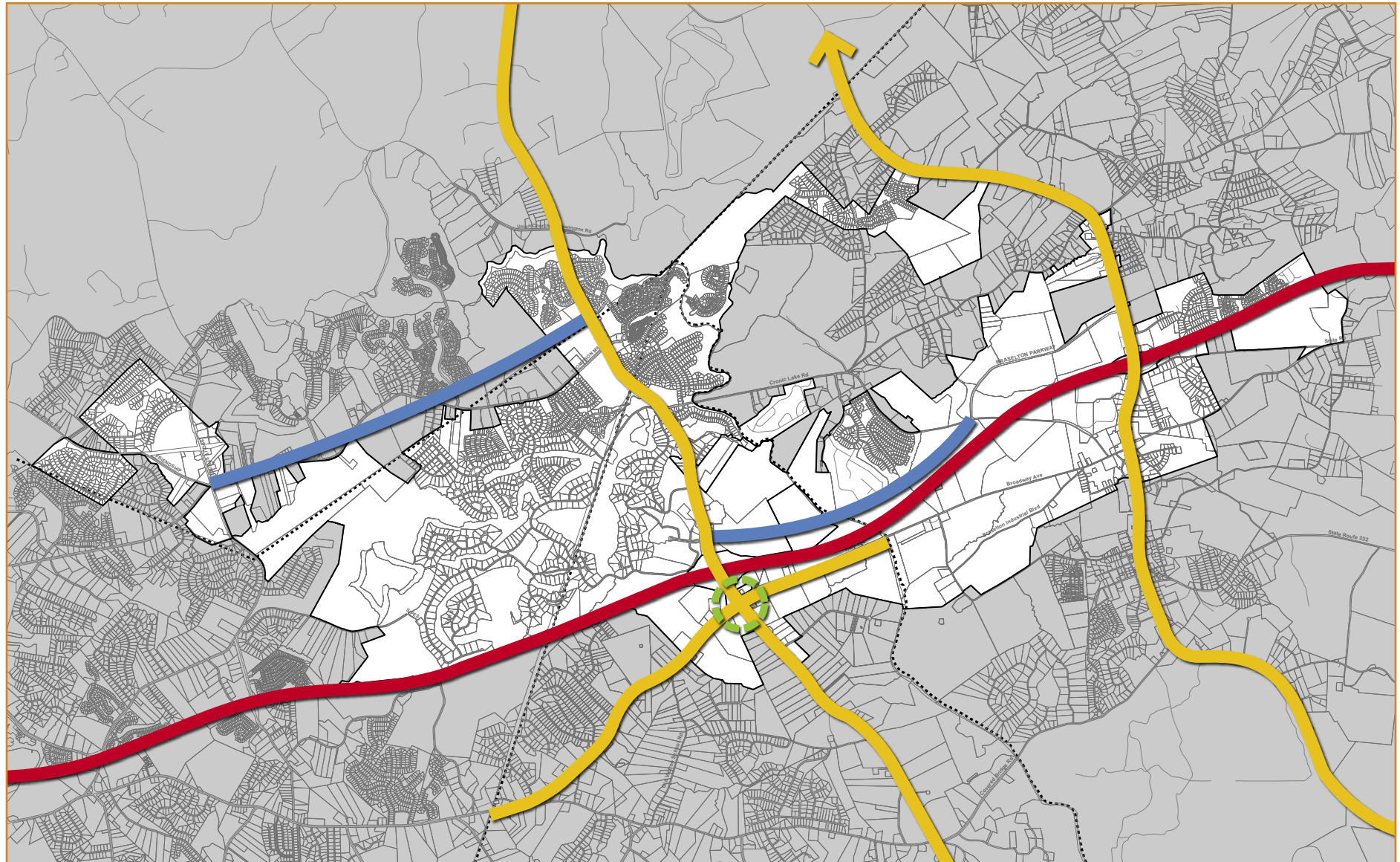



Figure 6-6: Programmed Transportation Improvements

— Town Limits
 County Lines

— Widen I-85 from 4 to 6 lanes
 — Widen from 2 to 4 lanes (long range)

— Concept (not programmed)
 Intersection Improvement



7.1 NATURAL RESOURCES:

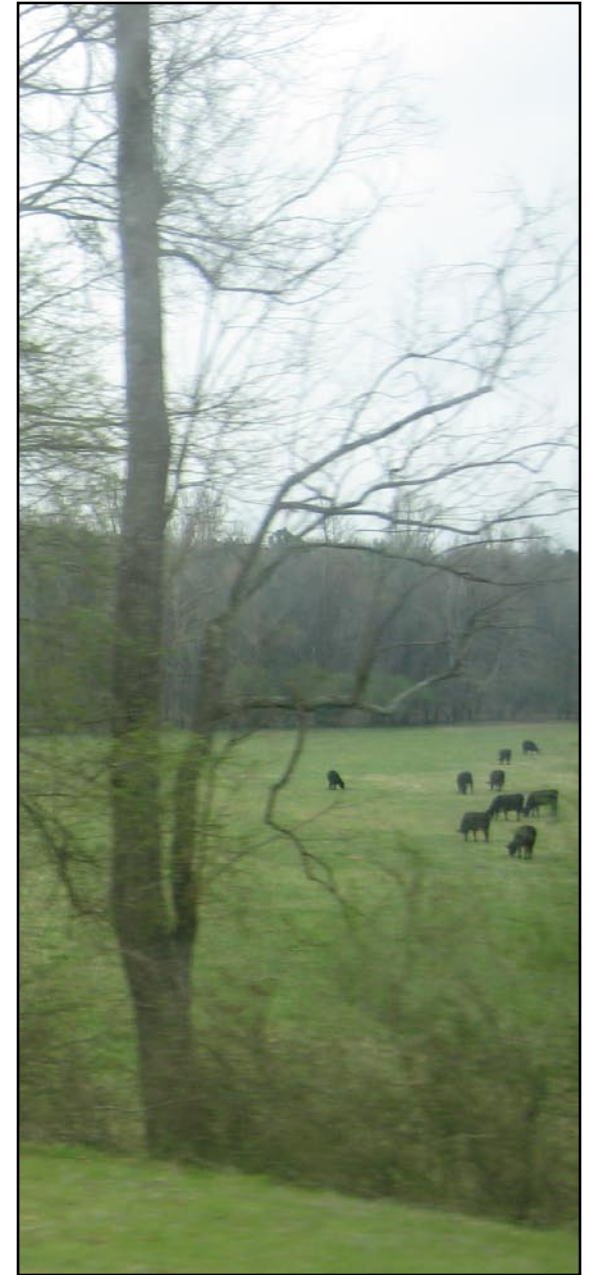
The Town of Braselton has been proactive in preserving its natural resources. With a full-time environmental specialist in the Town's Planning Department, Braselton continues to update and stay abreast of environmental protection practices and criteria established by the state.

The natural resource challenges and opportunities that Braselton will face in upcoming years are closely tied to growth. The Town has adopted several development regulations to protect its natural resources. As growth continues to occur, Braselton will need to monitor the effectiveness of these ordinances and modify or expand them to address ongoing concerns. Inter-jurisdictional coordination regarding watershed issues is a key opportunity for Braselton and its neighbors for maintaining a high quality of life.

The following section briefly reviews the Town's natural resources and compliance with related state and federal requirements. The discussion ends with a list of related natural resources opportunities and challenges Braselton faces in the planning period ahead.

Compliance with Environmental Planning Criteria:

The state's planning requirements provide localities with specific criteria that they must meet for protecting several environmental resources, including water supply watersheds, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, protected rivers, and protected mountains. Braselton has addressed all of these planning requirements through local ordinances.



Water Supply and Water Quality:

Clean water is a fundamental requirement for a healthy and vibrant community, providing a safe source of drinking water and helping ensure healthy animal and plant habitats. Safe and healthy water is also a fundamental requirement for attracting and sustaining desirable growth.

Public Water Supply Sources

Braselton receives its water from underground wells, two connections to the Gwinnett County Water System, one connection to the Jackson County Water System, and one connection to the Barrow County Water System.

Erosion and Sedimentation Ordinance

The Town of Braselton has adopted an ordinance which requires all non-exempt land disturbing activities to include provisions for soil erosion and sedimentation control measures and practices within all development plans. The ordinance also requires the pursuit of best management practices within all ordinances. The Town's ordinance is current with the amended 2003 law.

Rivers and Streams

The most significant body of water in Braselton is the Mulberry River, which expands from the Mulberry Creek, just north of Thompson Mill, and extends in a southeasterly direction through Jackson County. The Little Mulberry River joins with the Mulberry River just south of SR 124. The Town obtained land for conservation along the river near Thompson Mill Road, part of which is being used to create a the riverwalk.

Impaired Waterways

The Environmental Protection Division of DNR monitors Georgia's streams on a regular basis for water quality to meet the requirements of Section 305(b) of the Clean Water Act. **Figure A** in the Appendix Natural Resources section shows waterways within or immediately adjacent to Braselton that are not



meeting the requirements of the Clean Water Act. As indicated by their 4a categorization, appropriate actions are underway to address the causes of these violations and to bring these waterways into compliance.

Flora and Fauna:

Protection of at-risk plants and animals species, including their habitats, is a priority of the federal and state government. When applicable, these species should be protected by Braselton as it plans for the future. The Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division provides information on rare and endangered plants and animals by county. Jackson County, for instance, is home to three federally protected and one state protected plant species. The town should inventory potential annexation areas for such resources to address any habitat concerns that should be considered as new development occurs.

Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas:

Several other environmental factors should be taken into account when planning for a Braselton's future growth and development, including steep slopes, flood plains, soils, and agricultural land. These factors can help determine what areas are unsuitable for certain types of development and what areas require greater regulations to mitigate any undue environmental impacts as development occurs.

Steep Slopes

There are few steep slopes in Braselton, and those that do exist are generally associated with the banks of local waterways. Because of this, such development barriers are minimal, or already protected through their association with floodplains and local watersheds.



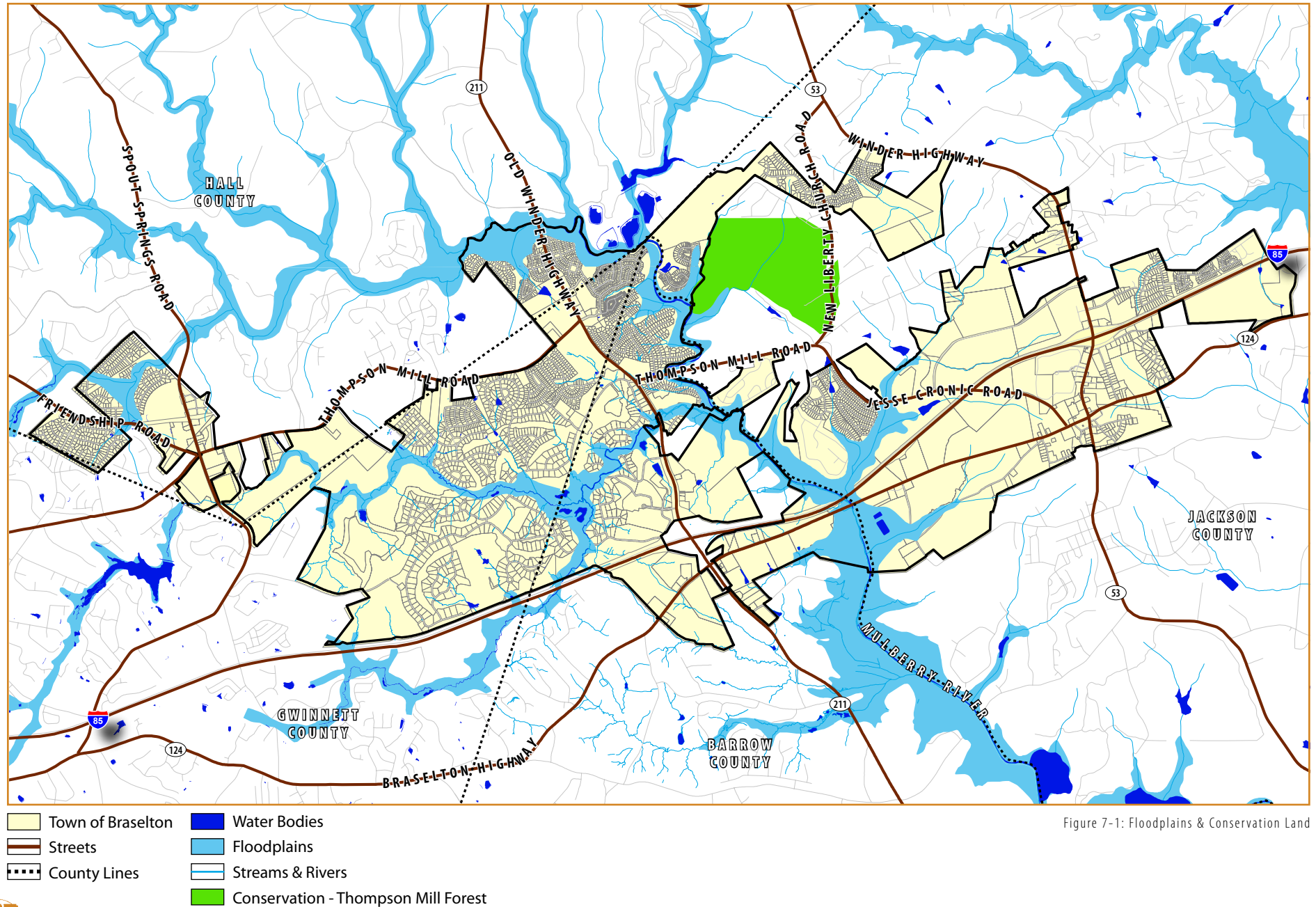


Figure 7-1: Floodplains & Conservation Land



Flood Plains

Braselton has a limited floodplains, most of which are located along the Mulberry River, Duncan Creek, and Wheeler Creek. Please see **Figure 7-1** for the location of floodplains within the Town of Braselton. Undeveloped land exists along each of these waterways, and the floodplain should be taken into account as development occurs on adjacent parcels. Braselton has recently obtained land for conservation purposes along the Mulberry River, in part, to address this concern. Braselton also participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, which provides many protections and resources for the community and property owners within the floodplain.

Agricultural Land

Slightly more than 5% of Braselton's existing land uses are currently agricultural lands, with most of these dedicated to vineyards for Chateau Elan. This is not a significantly high percentage. Braselton is highly urbanized, and because of this, farming is not anticipated within the town limits; however, as food costs continue to soar and more emphasis and prioritization is placed on locally grown produce, Braselton may wish to re-inventory vacant or abandoned lots for small scale production of local produce to be used as community gardens or other like minded greenspace. Please see **Figure 7-2** for the current location of agricultural land within the town's boundaries.

Soils

A soil survey of Barrow, Hall, and Jackson counties was completed in 1977. The last Comprehensive Plan update for Braselton reviewed this survey and found that soils in Braselton pose few limitations to development.

Other Significant Natural Resources:

Natural resources in Braselton that do not fall under strict state and federal regulation but are of high value to the community include the urban forest,

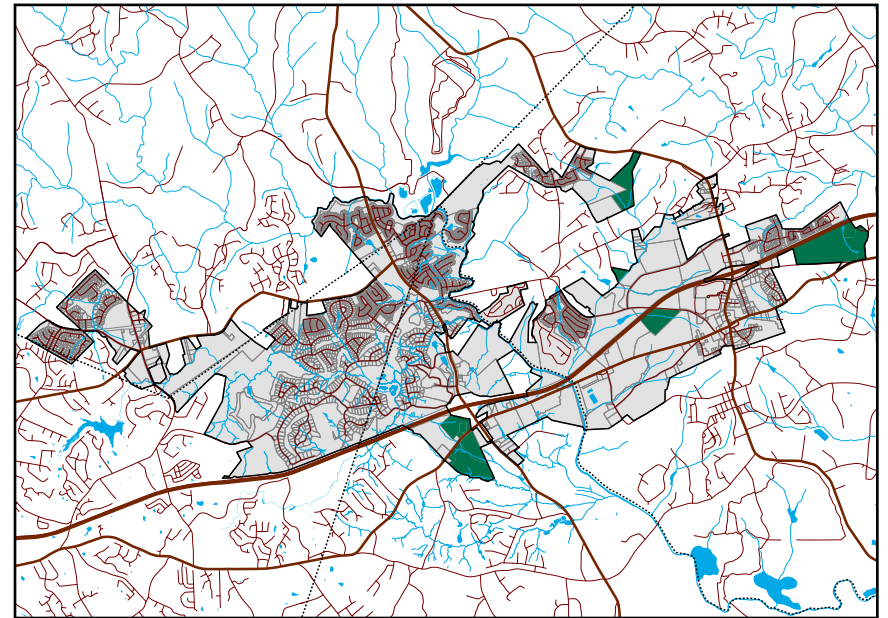


Figure 7-2: Agricultural Land



Community Assessment

recreation areas, and conservation areas. These resources will require special attention in the town's long term action plan.

Tree Canopy

Rapid growth threatens the town's tree canopy. Town ordinances do not provide sufficient criteria for tree protection and replacement.

Major Parks, Recreation and Conservation Areas

In 2000, Braselton joined with Jackson County and the municipalities of Arcade, Commerce, and Jefferson to complete a joint greenspace plan. This plan identified the need for new facilities throughout Jackson County and within the town limits. Braselton has been actively working toward meeting the goals of the plan and in expanding greenspace in the community. Notable resources include the Mulberry River Riverwalk and a planned new multi-purpose soccer complex for SR 124.

Not within the Town Limits, but adjacent to the Town of Braselton is 330 acres designated as Thompson Mills Forest, the State of Georgia's official arboretum. The property was deeded to the University of Georgia in 1980 by Lenox T. Thornton to provide teaching and research opportunities to students and researchers, establish an arboretum of native and exotic trees, and provide Georgia citizens and visitors an opportunity to study and enjoy the abundant plants of the region.

7.2 CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES:

The Town of Braselton's greatest cultural facilities and resources are its historic downtown and related resources. One such resource is the former library, which was recently converted to a local history museum. The Chateau Elan Winery and Resort, which attracts over half a million visitors a year, also serves as a significant cultural facility within the Town limits. The facility provides

7.0 NATURAL, CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES



space for special events and offers cultural activities such as wine tastings and cooking classes as well as recreational opportunities, including equestrian, rock climbing, and golf activities. Road Atlanta and Georgia International Speedway, located just north of the town, also offer a unique local cultural resource.

Evidence of Braselton's earliest settlement exists within its downtown along SR 124 and SR 53. Most of the town's historic resources are within the Braselton National Register Historic District listed in April 2001. The district covers approximately 600 acres and is comprised of 52 contributing properties whose construction dates range from 1875 to 1960 (see Figure 7-3).

Contrary to many historic Georgia towns, Braselton is not laid out in a grid pattern. While many of its historic structures are single family residential buildings, much of the town's early growth was a result of its existence as a commercial stop along the railroad spur that historically ran through the heart of the downtown. Evidence of this commercial prosperity is exhibited by the existing commercial and industrial buildings that date to the early twentieth century. These buildings are reminiscent of the agricultural, industrial and transportation development that took place from the 1880s to 1920s.

While the town takes pride in its heritage, there is not a comprehensive strategy in place to protect its historic fabric. Several historic buildings are vacant and/or in decay. The town can potentially harness these resources to reposition the downtown as a destination. The Town may also explore incentivizing the renovation and rehabilitation of historic buildings. Furthermore, a preservation committee or similar board may be considered to direct, oversee and monitor such efforts in order to ensure that new construction complements the town's existing historic fabric.



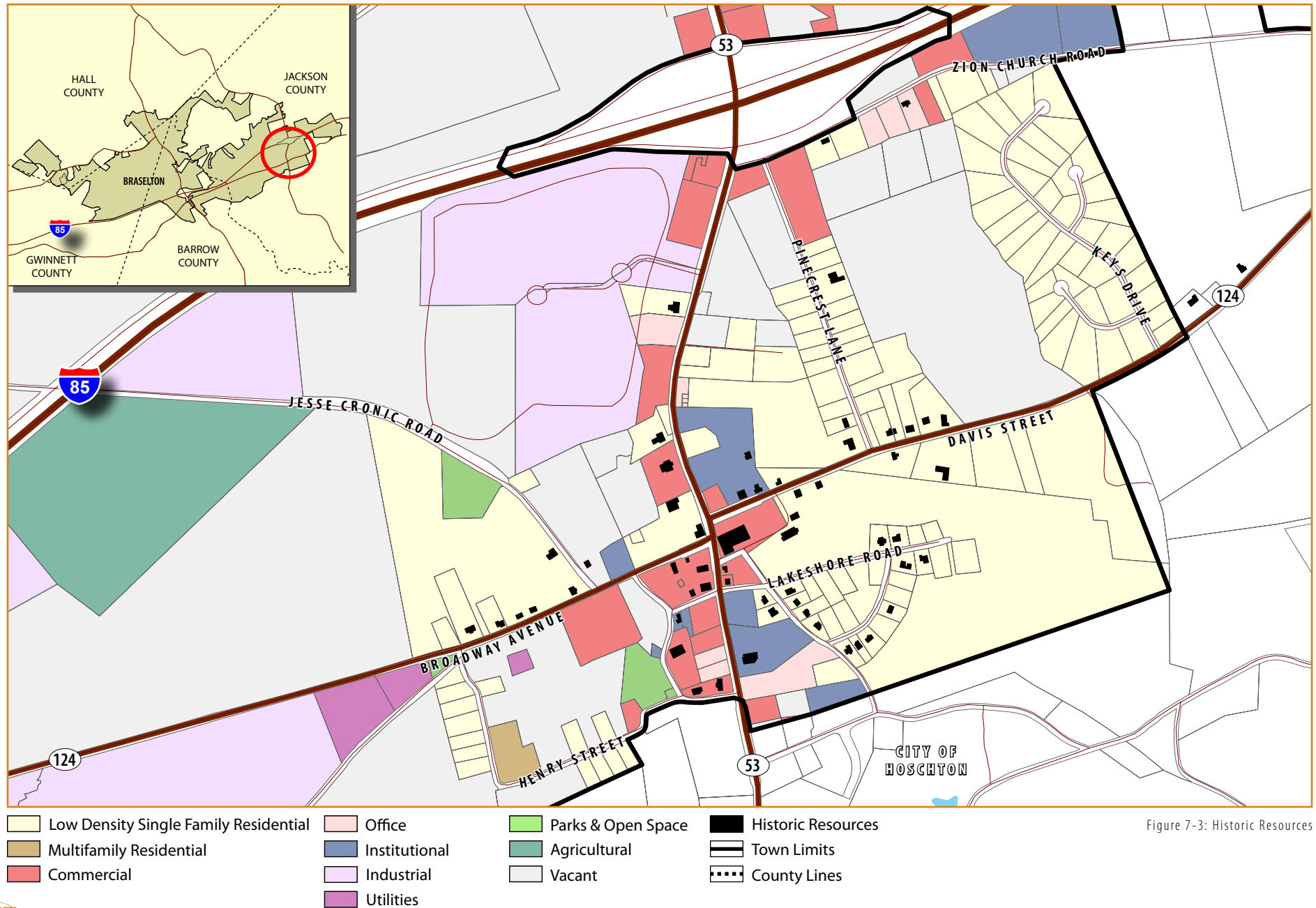


Figure 7-3: Historic Resources



8.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

While understanding the components of the Town's economy and what strengths and weaknesses its foundation has, it is important to note that the business climate and the actions of the local government are inextricably linked. While reviewing the quantitative data is critical to this process, it is crucial not to forget that qualitative issues do translate into hard dollar cost items for businesses as well.

The following Economic Development summary includes an assessment of key economic indicators, a brief discussion of the Town's unique economic assets, and a finding of significant trends and issues.

8.1 KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS:

Key economic indicators have been reviewed for the Town of Braselton and the four surrounding counties (Barrow, Gwinnett, Hall, and Jackson) through four sections in this document.

WORKERS: Information on labor force characteristics, unemployment, commuting patterns, and educational attainment is provided.

JOBS: Characteristics on employment trends, employers, industry sectors, occupations, and business size are profiled.

MONEY: Data on sources of income, wages, and sector and sub-sector wages is reviewed.

WORKERS:

The Town of Braselton's labor force totals 4,110, equaling approximately 68% of the Town's total population. This percentage is very similar to that of the Metro MSA and the State of Georgia.

According to the Georgia Department of Labor, the unemployment rate for Barrow County was 7.9% and Jackson County was at 7.4% in November 2008. For Gwinnett and Hall counties, the figures were 6.4% and 6.5%, respectively. As has been experienced across the nation, the unemployment rate in all four counties has been on the rise over the last year. The current unemployment rates are nearly twice the rates they were a year ago.

The most up-to-date information on commuting patterns is only available in census-taking years; the last census was taken in 2000. At that time, 69.5% of Braselton residents commuted outside their county of residence for employment.



JOB:

The total daytime population, or employees, for Braselton is approximately 3,500. However, Braselton has had significant employment growth since 2000 with an increase of approximately 550%. This statistic clearly demonstrates the transition Braselton has begun from a rural area in 2000 to being an active participant in economic growth along the I-85 corridor. There are approximately 200 businesses in Braselton.

At a county-level, Barrow County had the strongest job growth on a percentage basis at 32.2% over the five year period between 2003 and 2007. Jackson County's employment growth was also very strong at 20.5%. Hall and Gwinnett counties' job growth rates were 12.3% and 11.6% respectively. Although Gwinnett County had the slowest rate of growth on a percentage basis, it is important to note that its actual increase in jobs was much larger than the other three counties.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Barrow County	12,646	15,098	14,117	15,441	16,721
Gwinnett County	292,149	305,211	315,355	324,398	325,984
Hall County	65,839	66,398	67,291	70,695	73,940
Jackson County	15,414	16,885	18,518	19,568	18,573

Figure 8-1:

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

It is expected that employment growth will continue in Braselton at a steady rate over the next five to ten years. The characteristics of the Town that have attracted residential growth in the past, and particularly over the last decade, will continue to be assets for the Town in the future. In turn, the number of jobs is expected to continue to grow, based on the increases in the residential population and continued industrial development that is an employment draw for the surrounding area. It is projected that total employment will increase by approximately 61% over the next 10 years and more than double over the next 20 years².

Total Employment	2008	2013	2018	2023	2028
	3,500	4,500	5,630	6,760	8,110

Average Annual Change	2008-2013	2013-2018	2018-2023	2023-2028	
	6.0%	5.0%	4.0%	4.0%	

Figure 8-2:

Source: Claritas, Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, Market + Main, Inc.

Similar to the population projections, the long-term employment projections shown here differ from the ones developed by the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center. The level of employment today, according to the Town of Braselton's business license information, is higher than the RDC's projection for 2015. The rate of expansion for distribution facilities in particular based on Braselton's location on the Interstate 85 corridor has occurred much faster than expected. However, in light of the current national recession, surplus of industrial space across metro Atlanta, and many companies putting expansion plans on hold, the rates of future projected growth reflect these current realities and their expected impact over the next several years.

¹ Labor force is defined here as all persons between 16 and 65 years of age. This effectively excludes the elderly and children. However, these parameters should be considered cautiously, as many retirees are remaining active in the workforce.

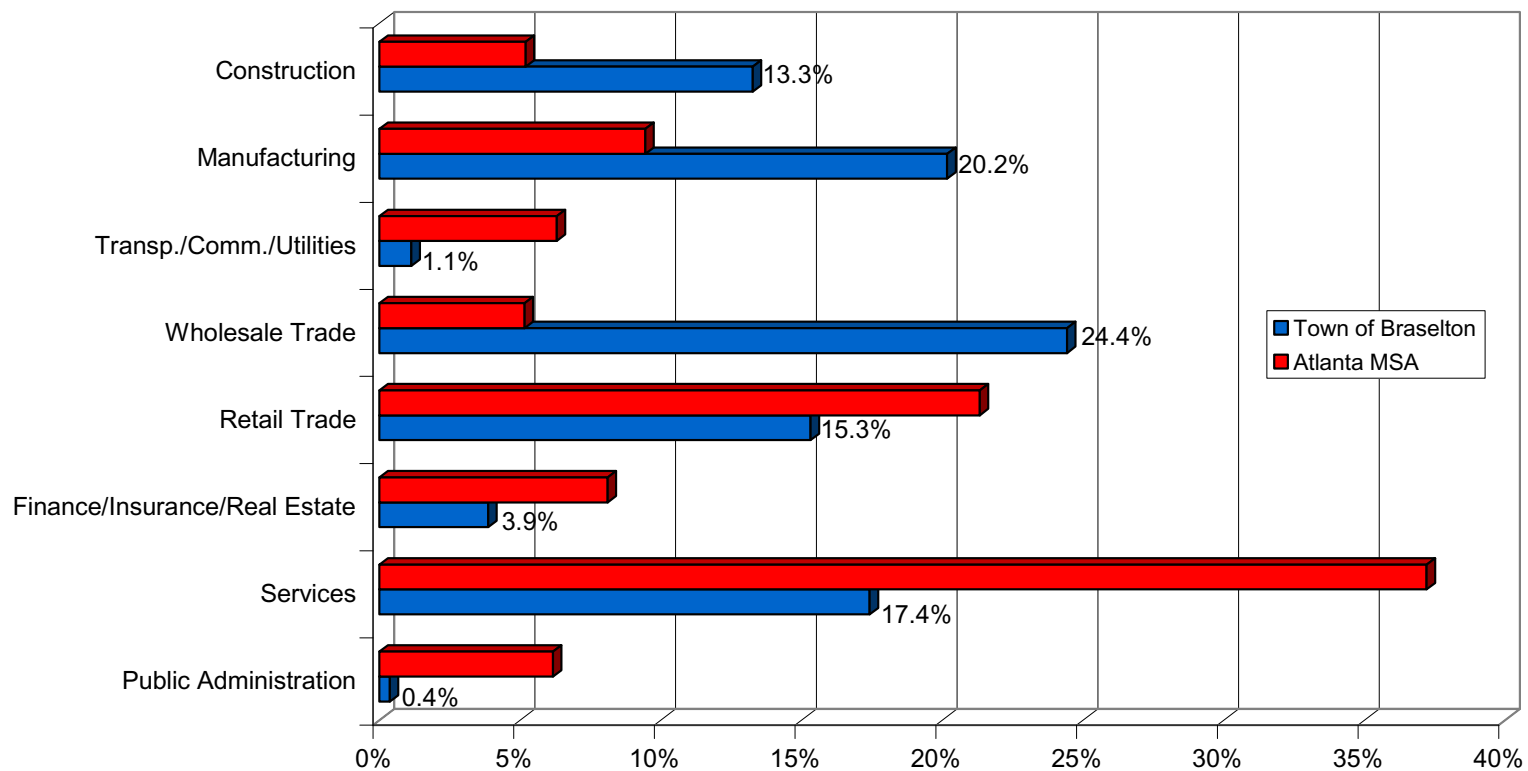


As depicted in the chart below, employment by sector in Braselton varies greatly from the region's employment. The largest percentage of jobs in Braselton are in the Wholesale Trade sector, at 24.4%. This is much greater than the MSA percentage of 5.2%. The second largest sector in Braselton is Manufacturing, at 20.2%. This compares to a MSA average of 9.5%. Braselton's strength in Wholesale Trade and Manufacturing are most likely the result of its location along the heavily industrialized I-85 corridor. These are also important sectors to note as they are usually high-paying. Another major difference in employment between Braselton and the Atlanta MSA is the Services sector. Services make up the largest sector in the MSA at 37.2%, but account for only 17.4% of Braselton's total employment.

Over the last two decade's Braselton's employment in wholesale trade has increased significantly, while employment in manufacturing sector has decreased sizably. Percentage employment in the services sector increased significantly between 1990 and 2000, but decreased between 2000 and 2008 in contrast to regional and national trends. The Town has significant concentrations in wholesale trade and manufacturing jobs, compared to national averages.

Figure 8-3: Sector Employment Comparison, 2008

Source: Claritas



The following table lists employers in Braselton with over 100 employees. The data is primarily sourced from business license application information from the Town of Braselton. According to the Gwinnett and Hall County Chambers of Commerce, none of what they consider their largest employers are located in the Town of Braselton.

Company	Jobs
The Home Depot	367
Haverty's Furniture Co. Inc.	276
Mayfield Dairy Farms Inc.	236
Chateau Elan Resorts, LLC	229
KD Acquisition I LLC	213
Genco I, INC	200
Tractor Supply Company	175
Year One Inc.	140
Kroger	122
Whole Foods Market Group Inc.	121
Cracker Barrel Old County Store	113
Progressive Lighting Inc.	107
Publix Super Markets Inc.	100

Figure 8-4: Sector Employment, 2008

Source: Claritas

The bulk of the Town of Braselton's employers are small businesses. In 2002, 59% of Braselton's 127 businesses had 1 to 4 employees. By 2006, the total number of businesses had grown to 243, and the proportion of those with 1 to 4 employees had increased to 64%. As employee size increases, the total number of businesses decreases. Approximately 11% of the businesses are sized between five and nine employees. Businesses with 10 to 19 employees and those with 20 to 49 employees each account for roughly 9% of the total. Roughly three percent of the businesses in the Town are sized between 50 and 99 employees. In 2006, there were four businesses with 100 to 249 employees

and there were four businesses with 250 to 499 employees. In 2006, there were no businesses with over 500 employees, however statistics from 2002 and 2003 report one business with between 500 and 999 employees.

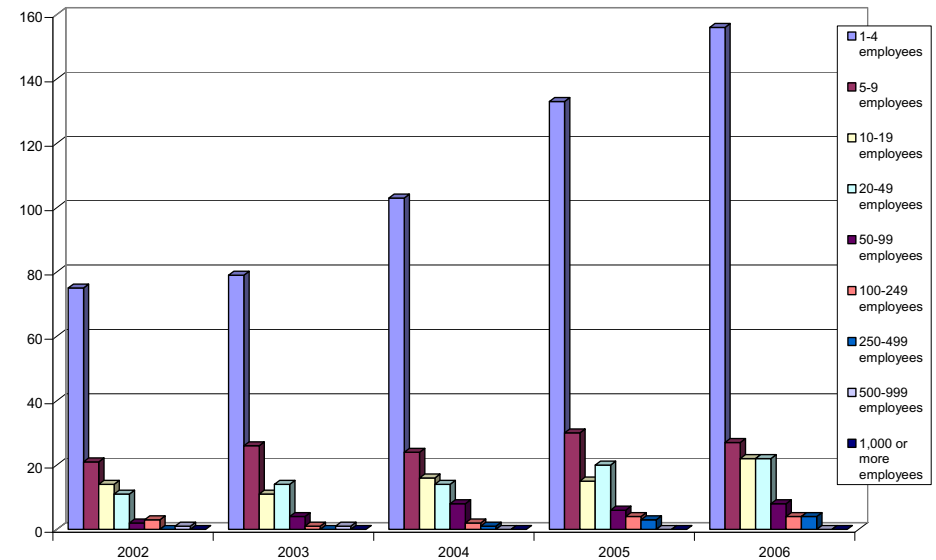


Figure 8-5: Business Size Trends, Zip Code 30517, 2002-2006

Source: US Census Bureau.



MONEY:

There are three primary sources of income: earnings, investments, and transfer payments. Earnings are wages and salary received from employment. Investments include unearned income from sources such as stocks, bonds, rents, and royalties. Transfer payments include governmental financial assistance, such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Data on average annual wages is collected at the county level. Average annual wages vary a great deal across the four counties surrounding Braselton. In 2007, both Jackson and Barrow counties had average wages slightly above \$31,000 per year, which equaled only about 65% of the MSA average and 70% of the national average. Hall County fared somewhat better with an average annual wage of almost \$37,000. Average annual wages were a great deal higher in Gwinnett County at slightly over \$45,000. The Gwinnett figure is just below the MSA average but is higher than the national average.

On the whole, wages in the region have not been making progress in catching up to the MSA and the nation. Both Barrow and Gwinnett counties lost ground between 2003 and 2007 when compared to the MSA and national averages. Hall County gained slightly when compared to the MSA and held steady when compared to the nation. Jackson County's wages remained approximately 65% of the MSA's, but the percentage comparison to national wages dropped a little over one percent. When the intervening years between 2003 and 2007 are considered, one does see more up and down movement in wages as compared to the MSA and nation, but overall there has not been much consistent improvement.

Wages that are below average are a mixed circumstance. For instance, some recruitment efforts might highlight to companies that labor force costs are cheaper in that locale. But, in the long-term, underpaid workers do not make

as strong an economic contribution, and low wages can also be an indicator about workforce quality.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Barrow County	\$27,836	\$28,372	\$30,057	\$31,207	\$31,288
% of MSA	66.3%	65.6%	67.4%	68.0%	65.0%
% of USA	73.7%	72.1%	73.9%	73.4%	70.4%
Gwinnett County	\$40,874	\$41,294	\$42,676	\$44,754	\$45,211
% of MSA	97.4%	95.5%	95.7%	97.5%	94.0%
% of USA	108.2%	104.9%	104.9%	105.2%	101.7%
Hall County	\$31,589	\$32,849	\$33,828	\$34,765	\$36,994
% of MSA	75.3%	76.0%	75.9%	75.8%	76.9%
% of USA	83.6%	83.5%	83.2%	81.7%	83.2%
Jackson County	\$27,166	\$28,773	\$29,218	\$30,334	\$31,371
% of MSA	64.7%	66.5%	65.5%	66.1%	65.2%
% of USA	71.9%	73.1%	71.8%	71.3%	70.6%
Atlanta MSA	\$41,959	\$43,250	\$44,595	\$45,889	\$48,111
United States	\$37,765	\$39,354	\$40,677	\$42,535	\$44,450

Figure 8-6:

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Across the four counties, jobs in the Retail Trade and Accommodations/Food Services tend to be low paying when compared to other employment in the area. The opposite is true for Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade. These jobs tend to pay higher wages than others in the area.



8.2 UNIQUE ECONOMIC ASSETS:

When considering unique economic activities, it is difficult to identify many specifics in any given community that can not also be found in another community somewhere else. For instance, the Town of Braselton has a small historic downtown that is certainly a potential asset, but many other communities across the metropolitan area, state, and even Southeast can boast a similar asset. However, there are two developments in Braselton that are definitely unique and can not be found elsewhere. These are described in more detail below.

Chateau Elan

Chateau Elan is a four-star resort and considered a “top-tier destination in the Southeast.” It is situated on 3,500 acres and includes a hotel, winery, and conference center. It also includes a European-style spa and several restaurants. There is an equestrian center, a tennis center, rock climbing and ropes courses, and four golf courses. A cooking school opened in 2007. Chateau Elan is the largest producer of wines in Georgia. The wines of Chateau Elan have won many national and international awards. Chateau Elan also includes a luxury residential community, with approximately 2,000 planned homes. It is estimated that there are well over half a million visitors each year to all of the facilities included in the Chateau Elan resort.

Road Atlanta

Road Atlanta is considered “the South’s premier motor sports facility” and one of the “world’s best road courses.” It is a multi-purpose motor sports facility spanning 750 acres. It is home to 14 professional and amateur sports car, motorcycle, and vintage racing events each year. Road Atlanta also provides racing and driving schools, including the Skip Barber Racing School, Kevin Schwantz Suzuki School, and Saab Aero Academy. The facility is also used for corporate programs and events and testing for auto manufacturers and motor sports teams. The Petit Le Mans is the biggest racing event at Road Atlanta,

and is the largest annual international sporting event held in Georgia. There are approximately 320,000 visitors annually to Road Atlanta each year, with people coming from 35 states and 18 countries.

Both of these unique assets for the Town of Braselton represent underutilized economic assets. Their economic development potential for the entire Town of Braselton is largely untapped. While each of these developments has hundreds of thousands of visitors annually, the Town has not yet been able to effectively harness all of these visitors into a revenue stream for the community. There is still much potential for Braselton to become more of a tourist destination and utilize these two unique assets to their fullest in order to benefit the entire Town.



8.3 MAJOR FINDINGS: TRENDS & ISSUES

The results and conclusions of this Economic Development Analysis are mixed for the Town of Braselton and the four surrounding counties. Since community capacity and business climate are really the accumulated sum of numerous individual factors, any individual shortcomings can result in a negative perception of the community. Conversely, strengths and assets can be leveraged to project a more positive image of the community.

Positive	Negative
Labor Force Participation Rates in all four counties are above the national average	There is a great imbalance across the four-county region when looking at wages and job opportunities.
The concentrations of the Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade industries in Braselton are assets since these are usually high-paying sectors.	On the whole, wages in the four-county region have not been making progress in catching up to the MSA and the nation.
The bulk of the Town's businesses are small. This can be helpful during economic transitions and diversifications.	Almost 70% of Braselton residents commuted outside their county of residence for employment.
Braselton has a relatively low reliance on transfer payments which indicates strong local wealth generation.	Jackson and Barrow counties have an unemployment rate (6.6%) that is higher than the national rate (6.1%).

Overall, the Town of Braselton and the surrounding area are fortunate to have many positive economic attributes. Growth in the area is strong, and many of the existing jobs are concentrated in sectors that tend to be higher paying. Strong growth, however, could also lead to a deterioration of economic conditions if there is not sufficient planning.

Three of the four counties surrounding Braselton struggle with lower wages. Without adequate planning, Braselton could also fall into this trap. The Town will need to seek out and provide an environment conducive to companies that will provide high quality employment opportunities with higher wages. The current differences between local wages and the Town's average household

income seem to indicate that it may be difficult for some who work in Braselton to also live there. It is important to make sure that future development of housing includes options that are in a price range accessible to those who work in the community.

To succeed and compete in this global environment, economic and community development efforts in Braselton will need to be redefined so as to continuously steward and improve the Town's future and long-term economic sustainability.



9.0 ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES:

The following list of issues and opportunities were developed by the Planning Team through stakeholder interviews, in cooperation with the 2030 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and with input from Town staff:

Land Use

- **Historic downtown**
- **Gateway to four counties: Jackson, Barrow, Hall, & Gwinnett.**
- **Perceived lack of higher end shopping**
- **Emerging Chateau Elan activity center**
- **Seeking greater cohesiveness and sense of place**
- Numerous commercial strip centers
- A desire for more aggressive growth management strategies
- Small-town atmosphere
- Multiple corridor overlays lack consistency / uniformity
- Linear east to west growth pattern
- Significant recent residential development
- Lack of control over growth in adjacent unincorporated areas
- Need coordination with plans for adjacent jurisdictions

Housing

- Much of the town's housing has been constructed over the last decade
- Homes are generally concentrated within 2 to 3 price points
- Recent subdivisions have included a large number of units
- Desire to further diversify housing price points (add units and underserved price ranges- \$300k to \$1 M)
- Desire to maintain the quality and upkeep of the Town's housing stock

Community Facilities

- **The Town provides Police Protection, but fire safety and EMS are provided by each county**
- The Town is working with Barrow County to consider a new recreation / soccer complex (SPLOST)
- Perceived lack of parks and recreation facilities within the town
- The Town is responsible for the local water and sewer district and has extended services to other adjacent communities

- The Town has begun distribution of graywater for irrigation in limited areas
- New library facility
- Should additional community services and facilities be considered?

Traffic & Transportation

- **Truck bypass around downtown has been considered**
- The Town features a number of major highways (53, 211, 347 and 124) and has excellent access to I-85
- Few bicycle facilities within the town
- Realignment of Thompson Mill Rd planned between Hwy 211 and Spout Springs Rd
- Truck stops
- Some concern over traffic speeds and the mixing of residential and industrial traffic
- Traditional suburban development patterns provide for few alternative transportation routes

Natural, Cultural, and Historic Resources

- **Strategies may be needed to ensure the upkeep of deteriorating historical structures**
- **Mulberry River is the focal point of a new "Riverwalk" under development**
- The town is working to provide additional park spaces and trails
- The downtown area contains a significant collection of historic structures
- Multiple recent developments have resulted in the loss of wooded areas

Economic Development

- **Emerging Focal point on SE side of I-85 at Hwy 211**
- **Limited office facilities**
- **Desire for more diversified retail goods and services**
- Chateau Elan Resort & Winery = 500,000 visitors to Braselton each year
- Road Atlanta = 350,000 visitors to the Braselton Area each year
- Strong industrial base (warehousing and distribution)

Miscellaneous

- Several major property owners own significant portions of land in and around Downtown Braselton



Listed below are the top 12 priority issues and opportunities for the Town of Braselton as identified by the Steering Committee and participants in an initial public input session (also highlighted on previous page).

- Historic downtown
- Gateway to four counties: Jackson, Barrow, Hall, & Gwinnett.
- Perceived lack of higher end shopping
- Emerging Chateau Elan activity center
- Seeking greater cohesiveness and sense of place
- Town provides Police Protection, but fire safety and EMS are provided by each county
- Truck bypass around downtown has been considered
- Strategies may be needed to ensure the upkeep of deteriorating historical structures
- Mulberry River is the focal point of a new “Riverwalk” under development
- Emerging Focal point on SE side of I-85 at Hwy 211
- Limited office facilities
- Desire for more diversified retail goods and services



10.0 QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

The following tables summarize existing conditions within the Town of Braselton as they relate to the Quality Community Objectives offered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Many of the suggested elements and principles have been embraced by the Town of Braselton over the last decade as the community has grown rapidly. Other smart-growth elements have been identified as areas of emphasis for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan by elected officials, city staff and community members. The Quality Community Objectives in combination with the issues and challenges identified in Section 9.0 provide a starting point for the Community Agenda to be developed by the Community in the Spring and Summer of 2009.



<i>Development Patterns</i>			
Traditional Neighborhoods			
Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.	✓		Office-Institutional areas allow integrated residential uses. The Town's Planned Unit Development ordinance incorporates mixed-uses
2. Our community has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional development "by right" so that developers do not have to go through along variance process.	✓		TND Ordinance adopted in 2005
3. We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.	✓		Part of the Town's residential code and corridor overlay districts for Highways 211, 124 and 53
4. Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in the summer.		✓	
5. We have a program to keep our public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.	✓		Various Clean-Up programs for riverwalk, parks and other public areas/properties



6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.		✓	Sidewalks are maintained, but provide limited walkability due to dispersed development pattern
7. In some areas several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.		✓	
8. Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.		✓	
9. Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.		✓	
10. Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.		✓	Schools are under the purview of the four counties and are located throughout the area- Jackson Primary School is the only facility within walking distance of the Town

Development Patterns

Infill Development

Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.		✓	
2. Our community is actively working to promote brownfield redevelopment.		✓	
3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.		✓	
4. We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road)		✓	Has been identified as a focus of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan
5. Our community allows small lot development (5,000 square feet or less) for some uses.	✓		



Development Patterns			
Sense of Place Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where he or she was, based on our distinct characteristics.		✓	
2. We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage, and have taken steps to protect those areas.	✓		Downtown Historic District and overlay ordinance
3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.	✓		
4. We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.	✓		
5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.	✓		However, illustrations need to be more comprehensive and easier to understand.
6. If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.		✓	

Development Patterns			
Transportation Alternatives Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have public transportation in our community.		✓	
2. We require that new development connects with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.	✓		Commercial developments required to provide multiple access points
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.		✓	
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.	✓		
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.	✓		
6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.		✓	



7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	✓		
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Development Patterns**Regional Identity**

Each region should promote and preserve a regional “identity”, or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.		✓	Downtown Braselton is characteristic of the region, however the presence of Chateau Elan has provided a new, French Empire aesthetic to part of the town
2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.		✓	
3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.)		✓	
4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development’s regional tourism partnership.		✓	
5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on unique characteristics of our region.	✓		
6. Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.	✓		Chateau Elan provides a significant amenity for the region

Resource Conservation**Heritage Preservation**

The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community’s character.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have designated historic districts in our community.	✓		The downtown district is on the National Register
2. We have an active historic preservation commission.		✓	
3. We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure this.	✓		Downtown overlay ordinance



Resource Conservation			
Open Space Preservation New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has a greenspace plan.		✓	
2. Our community is actively preserving greenspace, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.	✓		Mulberry Riverwalk
3. We have a local land conservation program, or we work with state or national land conservation programs, to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.		✓	
4. We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.	✓		

Resource Conservation			
Environmental Protection Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.		✓	Partially Complete
2. We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.		✓	
3. We have identified our defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.	✓		
4. Our community has passed the necessary "Part V" environmental ordinances, and we enforce them.	✓		
5. Our community has a tree preservation ordinance which is actively enforced.		✓	
6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.	✓		For residential developments
7. We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.	✓		
8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.)	✓		



Social and Economic Development**Growth Preparedness**

Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.	✓		
2. Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.		✓	
3. Our elected official understand the land-development process in our community.	✓		
4. We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.	✓		Some updates needed
5. We have a Capital Improvements Programs that supports current and future growth.	✓		
6. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth, and these areas are based on a natural resources inventory of our community.		✓	
7. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	✓		
8. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.		✓	
9. We have procedures in place that make it easy for the public to stay informed about land use issues, zoning decisions, and proposed new development.	✓		Website
10. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.	✓		

Social and Economic Development**Appropriate Businesses**

The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets and weaknesses, and has created a business development strategy based on them.	✓		
2. Our economic development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit businesses and/or industries that will be compatible.	✓		



3. We recruit firms that provide or create sustainable products.		✓	
4. We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple our economy.	✓		

Social and Economic Development**Employment Options**

A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.	✓		Through Chamber of Commerce
2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.		✓	
3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	✓		
4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	✓		Limited

Social and Economic Development**Housing Choices**

A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.	✓		
2. People who work in our community can also afford to live in the community.	✓		Somewhat
3. Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate and above-average).		✓	
4. We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and maintaining small setbacks.	✓		
5. We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or "neo-traditional" development.	✓		Allowed, but few current facilities available
6. We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.	✓		
7. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	✓		



8. We support community development corporations that build housing for lower-income households.		✓	
9. We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.		✓	
10. We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.	✓		

Social and Economic Development**Educational Opportunities**

Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community - to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community provides workforce training options for its citizens.	✓		
2. Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.	✓		
3. Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.	✓		
4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.		✓	Some jobs for graduates, but limited opportunities for young professionals

Government Relations**Regional Solutions**

Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. We participate in regional economic development organizations.	✓		
2. We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.	✓		
3. We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.	✓		
4. Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.	✓		



Government Relations			
Regional Cooperation Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for comprehensive planning purposes.	✓		
2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategy.		✓	
3. We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft regionwide strategies.	✓		
4. We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections, and discuss issues of regional concern.	✓		



11.0 AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION:

Three overall areas requiring special attention within the Town of Braselton were identified through a series of community leader and stakeholder meetings:

1. The Historic Downtown
2. The emerging Chateau Elan Activity Center/Highway 211 Corridor
3. The intersection of Thompson Mill Road and Spout Springs Road

The Historic Downtown area centered around the intersection of Highways 124 and 53 warrants special attention because of its rich historic fabric, its civic presence and its location along one of the two main Braselton I-85 exits. As referenced in section 7.2, the Historic Downtown includes a local history museum, a cluster of old commercial storefronts (including as the Braselton Brothers store), the historic Town Hall and a wide array of homes on the



Figure 11-1: Areas Requiring Special Attention



National Register of Historic Places. As mentioned in section 6.1, transportation improvements have been funded for this intersection. Recent civic uses such as the Planning Department, the Police Department, and the Library have been also built as historically-compatible new buildings, all located within this activity node. While Downtown is the historic center of the Town, much of the area's commerce and attractions have moved north and west along I-85. The Town has taken significant steps to revitalize the historic area through streetscape, roadway and town center enhancements, but the Comprehensive Plan must focus and additional support will be needed to attract new businesses to re-establish the Downtown area as an important focal point within the Town.

The emerging Chateau Elan/Highway 211 Corridor is a critical area requiring special attention due to the location of the forthcoming Northeast Georgia Medical Center along its northern end at Thompson Mill Road, the presence of Chateau Elan along its west side, the significant development opportunities around the Highway 211/I-85 intersection and the role of the corridor as the primary Braselton "gateway" exit off the interstate. The corridor also runs roughly parallel to the Mulberry River, acting as the main access to the area's natural and river-oriented amenities. Local goods and services destinations such as Publix are also located within the area.

The area surrounding the **intersection of Thompson Mill Road and Spout Springs Road** requires special attention due to its role as the Town's westernmost activity center, the presence of a significant amount of goods and services (Kroger, CVS Pharmacy, etc.), its adjacency to several large residential neighborhoods and planned transportation improvements to the area. Although existing commercial development here is conventional in nature, there exists a significant amount of undeveloped land adjacent these parcels. Widening of Thompson Mill Road has already begun to be implemented in conjunction with the future hospital to the east; such improvements will bring more traffic and activity to this node. Coordinated land use, transportation, and



service delivery strategies will be needed to prevent future traffic congestion and enhance the sustainability of the Spout Springs neighborhood commercial center.

While these geographical areas have emerged as the focal points for special attention, the Comprehensive Plan will also focus on reinforcing a nodal development pattern and discerning growth management strategies for undeveloped portions of the Town north of I-85 between Highways 211 and 53 and the edges of town including the northern and southern end of Highway 211 and the north end of Highway 53.



12.0 RECOMMENDED CHARACTER AREAS:

Eight (8) Character Areas were identified by the Town stakeholders, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and Town Leaders based on anticipated growth over the next 20 years and the character desired for the Town of Braselton. As shown on the map below, the eight geographical areas are identified with a projected “intensity,” based on a combination of likely market pressure and appropriate densities for future development.

The darker red “priority character areas” are likely to be the focus of short-term development and redevelopment and exhibit more significant change over the next 10 years. Areas denoted in orange represent portions of town that should exhibit less intense development and will likely exhibit limited change until the later years of the 20-year planning horizon. Yellow areas should be the focus of lower density residential development or accommodate natural/conservation areas.

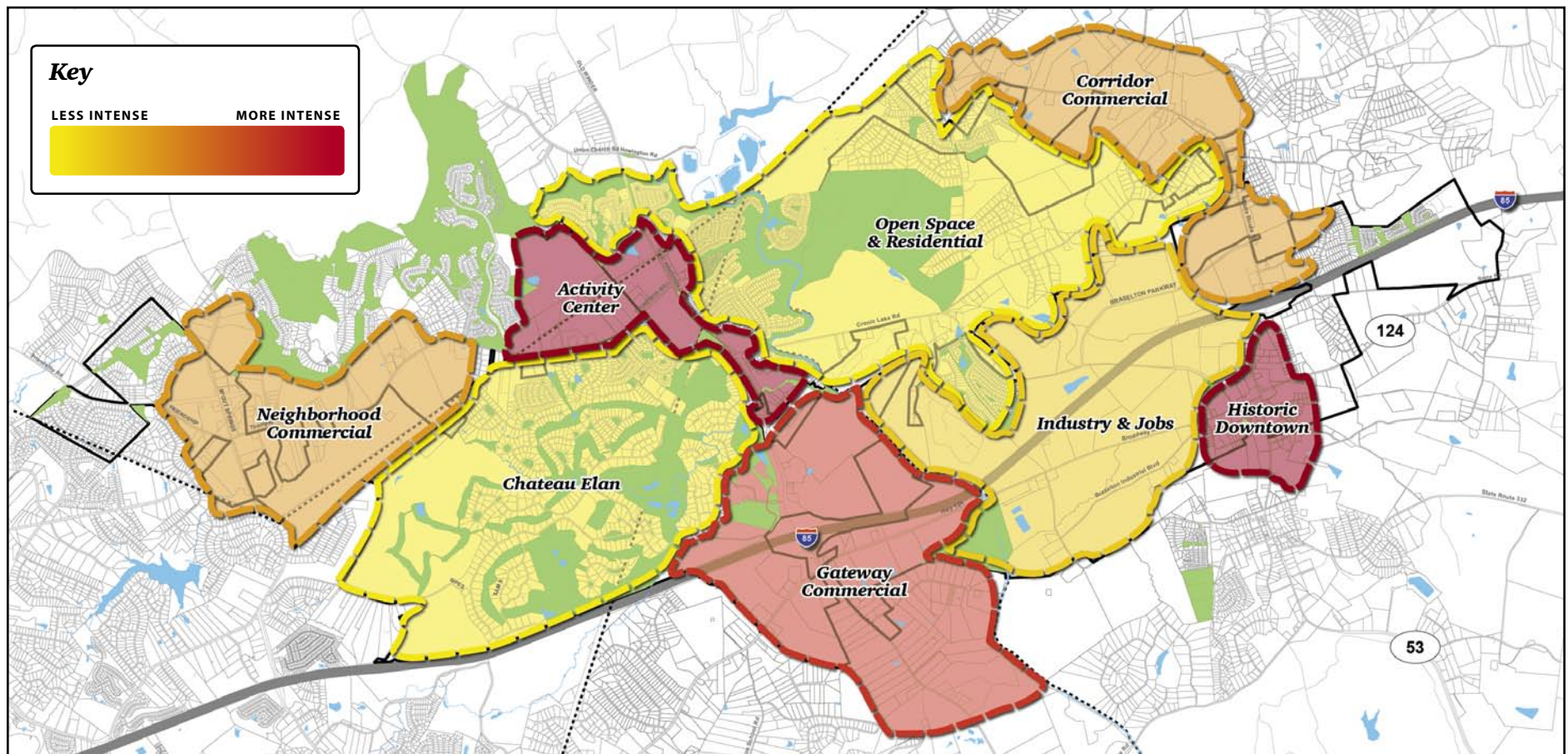


Figure 12-1: Preliminary Character Areas Map

12.1 PRIORITY CHARACTER AREAS

The future of the **Historic Downtown Character Area** should build upon the Historic Braselton Revitalization Plan, taking advantage of both the high concentration of historic resources and the presence of most of the Town's civic buildings. Planned traffic improvements such as the SR 53/SR 124 realignment project, the Zion Church Road project and Downtown streetscape enhancements will serve to bring investment and better access to this important node. Planning for the Downtown Area should focus on opportunities to "fill in the gaps" between Downtown and the I-85 / SR 53 exit, creating a more welcoming "front door" to one of the Town's greatest assets. Guiding principles for the Historic Downtown area include preserving the area's existing historic character, encouraging historically-compatible infill development, encouraging compact pedestrian-friendly development patterns, adding new residential units within walking distance of the Downtown, adding landscaping and signage and interconnecting Downtown green spaces.

The I-85 exit at the **Gateway Commercial Character Area** is the "front door" to Chateau Elan, the gateway to both Barrow and Hall Counties and a primary entrance to the Highway 124 Industrial corridor. The area includes two significant development sites abutting the interstate - one to the northeast between Hwy 211 and the Mulberry River and another to the southwest around the intersection of Highways 211 and 124. To encourage a more sustainable development pattern and create orderly transportation patterns, one of these two sites should be promoted as a regional commercial center while the other should be developed into a compact mix of uses such as higher-end retail and senior/multi-story housing. This character area will need aggressive architectural controls to maintain and enhance the character of development around Chateau Elan, should require inter-parcel connectivity, and seek to establish trail connections to the Mulberry River Greenway.



The **Activity Center Character Area** north of Chateau Elan on Highway 211 presents an opportunity to capitalize on the planned North Georgia Medical Center as a catalyst for a new mixed-use Activity Center within the Town of Braselton. Given the high amount of projected activity including visitors and employees, the area is envisioned as a more walkable, pedestrian-oriented center. The addition of multifamily housing, locally-serving retail, and medical office uses would complement each other if incorporated within a concentrated area around the medical center. Furthermore, a community greenspace should be identified and promoted as a development focal point, potentially spanning either side of the soon-to-be realigned Thompson Mill Road.



12.2 OTHER CHARACTER AREAS

The **Corridor Commercial Character Area** along Highway 53 north of I-85 is a gateway into Hall County and the Road Atlanta motor sports facility. This portion of Highway 53 is envisioned as a residential corridor with small, neighborhood-serving commercial nodes concentrated at key intersections between I-85 and Road Atlanta. While more conventional commercial development types may be appropriate immediately north of the interstate exit, landscaping and architectural character should be more defined to reinforce Braselton's sense of place and character. Future pedestrian connections between commercial nodes and adjacent residential neighborhoods can minimize congestion by reducing short-distance vehicle trips.

The **Industry & Jobs Character Area** straddles I-85 between the Historic Downtown and the Gateway Commercial Areas. Future efforts should continue to focus on generating employment within the Town, building off the existing warehousing, distribution and industrial base. Although future access to I-85 will need to be improved, strategies for separating automobile and commercial truck traffic will be important to the area's safety and efficiency.

Encompassing the area around the intersection of Thompson Mill and Spout Springs Roads is the **Neighborhood Commercial Character Area**. Given the limited accessibility and proximity to other regional roadways, commercial uses here should continue to serve local neighborhoods. Although the area already includes a significant amount of conventional commercial development, corridor guidelines (architecture and landscaping) are envisioned for the area. Transportation enhancements at key locations will be considered as well as trail connections to adjacent residential areas, where possible.

The future **Open Space & Residential Character Area** within the northern part of the town currently includes the Mulberry River, the University of



Georgia-operated Thompson Mills Forest Arboretum and a significant amount of low-density single-family developments. Future efforts should foster the preservation of open spaces and natural resources in this area and enhance the area as one of Braselton's primary residential zones. A more aggressive tree ordinance may need to be considered to meet this objective. Clearer east-west connectivity should also be pursued between Highways 211 and 53. Since a majority of the area currently falls outside the town limits, annexation strategies will be considered to create greater cohesion and service delivery clarity.

The **Chateau Elan Character Area**, also mentioned in section 1.2, includes the area around the Chateau Elan Winery and Resort. The town should continue to support the Chateau Elan Master Plan as a key attraction and economic driver.

